

UNIVERSITY OF ST. MICHAEL'S COLLEGE



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GOLDEN LEGENDS OF THE OLDEN TIME.

“No cross, no crown.”—WILLIAM PENN.

“J’ai prêché beaucoup la vie crucifiée et la nécessité d’y entrer ; mais si je remontais dans chaire chrétienne, je la prêcherais encore beaucoup plus.”

ADOLPHE MONOD.

Golden Legends

OF THE OLDEN TIME.

BY

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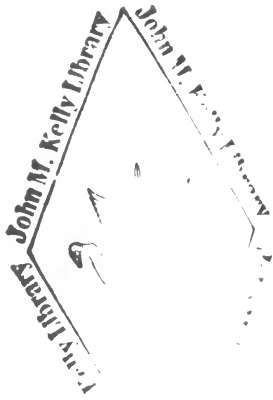
"HOMES AND HAUNTS OF LUTHER," ETC.

London :

HODDER AND STOUGHTON,

27, PATERNOSTER ROW.

MDCCLXXXV.



DEDICATED

TO MY BELOVED CHILDREN AND GRANDCHILDREN,

WITH FRAGRANT MEMORIES AND

JOYFUL HOPES.

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INTRODUCTION.

HAVING, in the course of my ecclesiastical studies throughout a long life, become somewhat familiar with Church legends, I have often thought there was room for a popularly written volume containing a number of such compositions as are likely to interest young people. The project, however, fell asleep until recently, when, in conversation with my son-in-law, the Rev. Alfred Holborn, of Bradford, it woke up with much liveliness; and he earnestly advised me, for the sake of my children, and grandchildren, and numerous friends, to undertake the task without delay. I set to work, and found it a pleasant employment; and I now present the result to others, as well as my own circle, with the hope that they may be not only entertained, but benefited, by perusing the following chapters.

I have been the more drawn to the attempt by thinking of pictures in English and foreign galleries, with which, in these days of artistic culture and continental travel, people are becoming more and more acquainted. Whilst journeying with my own family,

I have found them interested in the relation of several stories given in this book.

Considering that narratives of this kind formed the popular literature of the Middle Ages, both written and spoken, they are on that ground deserving of attention. If national ballads have a formative power over the character of a people, the same may be said of legendary tales. However incredible or trifling they may appear to us, they were far from being so in the estimation of our forefathers, who preserved them as precious relics of the past, and as shadowing forth hopes for the future. Nor should it be forgotten, that those here introduced are akin to the great family of pictorial facts and fictions alive in every age and country of the world—Egyptian, Assyrian, Jewish, Greek, Roman, Celtic, and Saxon.

My concluding chapter contains some thoughts on the character and uses of that which I have here endeavoured to represent. Legends belong, it is true, to the childish ages of Christendom as we regard them, and they are now put away amongst childish things; but men and women turn back with interest to what engaged their attention in early life, and, looking beneath the surface, can find even in childish things profit as well as pleasure.

And further, as we read these stories, we are struck with the fact that many of them turn upon the subject of self-sacrifice, upon the necessity of taking up the cross if we would be Christ's disciples.

The duty, now too much neglected, and then too often misunderstood, is an aspect of Christianity which once arrested attention to a surprising extent; and therefore I have thought the sentence before the title page, from the recently-published *Memoirs of Adolphe Monod*, a fitting motto for a number of the legends in this volume. "A crucified life" is an expression which did not mean the same thing to that admirable man that it did to those whom I describe on these pages; but it will be well for us if we learn to be "crucified with Christ," after that more excellent way which is taught by the Apostle Paul.

Legend is a name not originally designed to express the *nature* of narratives so designated. They might be traditional or allegorical, they might be histories or myths. Of that the name said nothing. It only described them as things *appointed to be read* in churches and refectories on certain days. They relate to saints, and describe marvellous incidents; and so in time the title lost its neutral tint, and came to be indicative of marvellous stories in general.

Early Church legends are derived from "apocryphal Gospels, Acts, and Revelations," written and circulated within the first four centuries of the Christian era. They are preserved in different texts—Latin, Greek, Coptic, and Arabic. There is an English translation of them in vol. xvi. of Clarke's *Ante-Nicene Library*. Other legends published in vol. iii.

of the same series are contained in "the Clementine Recognitions,"—a sort of novel,—to which, as well as other compositions of the same sort, I shall have occasion to refer hereafter.

At the latter part of the thirteenth century, Jacobus Voragine, Archbishop of Genoa, compiled what are called the "Legenda Aurea," or Golden Legends filled with the lives of numerous saints. It was translated out of the original Latin into other languages, English amongst the rest. Another somewhat similar composition—but embracing moral lessons as well as narratives—was produced, it is believed, by the prior of a Benedictine convent at Paris in 1362. It is entitled "Gesta Romanorum," and has also appeared in an English dress.

"The Golden Legend," printed by William Caxton, bears more immediately on my subject; and it is because several of the stories given on the following pages, though derived from various sources, are substantially the same as those in his "Golden Legend" and in the "Legenda Aurea," that I have ventured to adopt my present title.

The great storehouse of legendary lore must, however, be sought in the "Acta Sanctorum," edited by the Bollandists. For the sake of young readers not familiar with their name, I may explain that the Bollandists were a company of learned Roman Catholics, taking their appellation from John Bolland and others, who, in the seventeenth century, began to collect Lives of the Saints.

The fifty-third folio volume appeared in 1794, when the work was suspended, and not resumed till 1837. Then a new Bollandist company was formed to carry on the laborious enterprise, which is, I believe, still in progress. The three volumes for April (the work is arranged according to Saints' days in each month) contain, it is said, 1,472 lives; and the fifty-three volumes altogether include more than 25,000 distinct memoirs. They are not so much original compositions historically digested by the editors, as original authorities on the subjects—many of them printed from MSS. carefully annotated. No one can look into these portly folios without being astonished at the execution of such an Herculean task. They furnish an immense amount of material for the illustration of names canonized by the Church. Much is of historical worth, much also is apocryphal; though it is not to be forgotten that the Bollandists have been all the way through, learned, and critical also, for they reject many things found in ancient documents. There are in existence lives of distinguished men composed by Jerome, Bede, and other authors, also annals and biographies of monastic orders not needing specification in such a book as mine. The Rev. Alban Butler's "Lives of the Fathers, Martyrs, and other Principal Saints," is a standard English work, containing numerous legends. He writes from a Roman Catholic point of view. The Rev. S. Baring Gould has published another compilation under an Anglo-Catholic inspiration; and earlier

writers of the same school have produced similar Lives. I scarcely need mention here Mrs. Jameson's charming volumes on legendary art.

I do not profess to write Lives of saints, but only legendary parts of them, adding, however, accepted facts, so as to render the stories intelligible; and I may remark that I employ the word Saint simply on account of its common use, without recognizing the significancy attached to it in some Christian communions.

In writing formal biographies and annals, it is usual to employ legends only *so far as* they appear probable: thus poetry and romance are sacrificed, while only a vague and unsatisfactory impression is left on the reader's mind. My method is different, and I wish to exhibit some materials as I find them, from which much of old Church history has been compiled; therefore I have selected specimens of all kinds, varying much in character and interest, and in many instances I have not made any critical remarks respecting them.

CHAPTER I.
THE VIRGIN MARY.

“And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee : blessed art thou among women. And when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be.”—LUKE.

CHAPTER I.

THE VIRGIN MARY.

WISHING, so far as it is possible, to preserve a chronological order in these chapters, I begin with the Virgin Mary.

As a subject of Divine grace, and as saved through the mediation of her Divine Son, there is nothing exceptional in the position she occupies in the Christian Church; but, as the mother of our Lord, as the means of His miraculous incarnation, and as an example of purity, humbleness, and devotion, she is pre-eminently worthy of our reverence. The extravagant homage paid her in mediæval and modern times by so many people, has, since the sixteenth century, produced a reaction; and she, who was saluted by the angel Gabriel as "highly favoured," and as "blessed among women"; she who was to be overshadowed by the Holy Ghost, so that the Holy One born of her was called by the angel the Son of God, has really been robbed of the remembrance, the honour, and the love, which, on Scripture grounds, appear her rightful due.

It is remarkable how small a portion of the New

Testament belongs to her history ; how silent the Epistles are in reference to her name ; how absent she is from the writings of the Apostolic Fathers ; how scanty is the allusion made to her in Justin Martyr ; how significant is the mention by Irenæus of her "untimely" haste at the marriage feast of Cana ; and then how unprecedented is his calling her "the patroness of the Virgin Eve, by whose means the human race was rescued from bondage to death." But in process of time, Patristic teaching, in relation to our Lord's mother, undergoes a change, the comparative reticence of the New Testament is abandoned, and we meet with "the Gospel of the nativity of Mary," "the History of Joseph the Carpenter," "the Infancy and boyhood of Jesus," and "the assumption of the Virgin," in different forms. It is from these apocryphal works that we derive several legends.

She was the daughter of Joachim and Anna. Joachim, rich in flocks and herds, feared the Lord in singleness of heart, and won the love of his neighbours by charitable deeds. Anna, all virtuous, became his wife when he reached his twentieth year ; but their want of children proved a sore trial. Ashamed of the reproach it brought upon him as a Jew, he fled from her, and also from the shepherds round about, to live by himself in a mountain solitude. But the Lord heard his prayers, and gave him a little girl,

who was called "Mary." An apocryphal gospel says: "And when the circle of three years had rolled round, and the time of her weaning was fulfilled, they brought the Virgin to the temple of the Lord, with offerings. Now there were round the temple, according to the fifteen Psalms of Degrees, fifteen steps going up; for, on account of the temple having been built on a mountain, the altar of burnt offerings could not be reached except by steps. On one of these, then, her parents placed the little girl, the blessed Virgin Mary. And when they were putting off the clothes which they had worn on the journey, and were putting on, as was usual, others that were neater and cleaner, the Virgin of the Lord went up all the steps, one after the other, without the help of any one leading her or lifting her, in such a manner that in this respect, at least, you would think she had attained full age. For already the Lord in the infancy of His Virgin wrought a great thing, and by the indication of this miracle foreshowed how great she was to be. Therefore, a sacrifice having been offered according to the custom of the law, and their vow being perfected, they left the Virgin within the enclosures of the temple, there to be educated with the other virgins, and themselves returned home."

When she was fourteen the high priest told her she ought to be married, but her parents having

dedicated her to a single life, she could not comply with this advice, though it came with such authority. A revelation from above removed her objection, and directed her to unite herself with him who should be pointed out by an unmistakable sign.

Here is the legend at full length :—

“And Mary was in the temple of the Lord, as if she were a dove that dwelt there, and she received food from the hand of an angel. And when she was twelve years old there was held a council of the priests, saying : ‘Behold, Mary has reached the age of twelve years in the temple of the Lord. What then shall we do with her, lest perchance she defile the sanctuary of the Lord?’ And they said to the high priest : ‘Thou standest by the altar of the Lord ; go in, and pray concerning her ; and whatever the Lord shall manifest unto thee that also will we do.’ And the high priest went in, taking the robe with the twelve bells into the Holy of Holies ; and he prayed concerning her. And behold an angel of the Lord stood by him, saying unto him : ‘Zacharias, Zacharias, go out and assemble the widowers of the people, and let them bring each his rod, and to whomsoever the Lord shall show a sign, his wife shall she be.’ And the heralds went out through all the circuit of Judæa, and the trumpet of the Lord sounded, and all ran. And Joseph, throwing away his axe, went out to meet them ; and when they had

assembled they went away to the high priest, taking with them their rods. And he, taking the rods of all of them, entered into the temple and prayed; and having ended his prayer, he took the rods and came out, and gave them to them; but there was no sign in them, and Joseph took his rod last; and behold, a dove came out of the rod and flew upon Joseph's head. And the priest said to Joseph, 'Thou hast been chosen by lot to take into thy keeping the virgin of the Lord.' But Joseph refused, saying: 'I have children, and I am an old man, and she is a young girl. I am afraid lest I become a laughing stock to the sons of Israel.' And the priest said to Joseph: 'Fear the Lord thy God, and remember what the Lord did to Nathan, and Abiram, and Korah; how the earth opened, and they were swallowed up on account of their contradiction. And now fear, O Joseph, lest the same things happen in thy house.' And Joseph was afraid, and took her into his keeping. And Joseph said to Mary: 'Behold, I have received thee from the temple of the Lord; and now I leave thee in my house, and go away to build my buildings, and I shall come to thee. The Lord will protect thee.' And there was council of the priests, saying, 'Let us make a veil for the temple of the Lord.' And the priest said: 'Call to me undefiled virgins of the family of David.' And the officers went away, and sought, and found

seven virgins. And the priest remembered the child Mary, that she was of the family of David and undefiled before God. And the officers went away and brought her. And they brought them into the temple of the Lord. And the priest said: 'Choose for me by lot who shall spin the gold, and the white, and the fine linen, and the silk, and the blue, and the scarlet, and the true purple.' And the true purple and the scarlet fell to the lot of Mary, and she took them and went away to her house."

After marriage the Virgin went one evening to draw water at the well of Nazareth, and there she heard a voice saying, "Blessed art thou, Mary." On her return, while sitting in the house at work, an angel approached her with the words, "Hail, full of grace," and announced the coming incarnation. The purple and scarlet, she was spinning at the time for temple service, she took to the priest for his benediction.

The Holy Nativity is described as occurring in a cave. A midwife was sent for, and as she saw a luminous cloud resting on the child, she exclaimed, "My soul has been magnified this day, because mine eyes have seen strange things, and because salvation has been brought forth to Israel." The eyes of those present could not bear the radiance which broke upon them. In a little while the Virgin took up the babe, and nursed it. All the circumstances

noticed in the legend are too numerous and minute to be mentioned.

When, after the Magi's visit, Herod the king saw that he was mocked, he fell into a great rage, saying to his officers, "Slay the children from two years old and under." Mary, hearing this, took her infant, and placed him in an ox stall.

Old painters loved to dwell on the journey of the wise men from the East. The guiding star, their prostration before the Saviour, and the offering of their gifts caught artistic imaginations; and we see the three kings, as they are called, in bright-coloured garments, often with negro faces, and followed by a train of laden camels, kneeling down at the foot of the manger, and opening treasures of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

During the flight into Egypt the family came to a hollow rock, where they stopped to rest. Three boys and one little girl were with them. Dragons rushed out of the rocks and frightened the children. Jesus left His mother's lap, and made the dragons crouch down and worship. Also lions and panthers met Him in the desert, and did just as the dragons had done. It further came to pass that these wild creatures tamely walked beside the oxen and asses which carried the luggage, protecting it from robbers. Other marvels followed, including the bending down of a palm tree, to shed dates on the Virgin's lap.

One of the branches being plucked by an angel was transplanted to the heavenly paradise.

Little is added to the Scripture history of Mary at the cross, and that little is not worth repeating. It shows signs of a later origin, when Christian worship had adopted Jewish ceremonies ; for the Virgin is described as burning incense at our Saviour's tomb. More startling still is it to be told that she passed to and fro invisibly on this occasion, when the heavens opened, and Gabriel came from heaven to hold conversation with her.

A book entitled "The Falling Asleep of Mary" gives a wonderful account of her latter days. Six apostles came from different parts of the world to visit her—Peter from Rome, Paul from Tiberia,* Thomas from India, James from Jerusalem. More wonderful still, Andrew, Philip, Luke, Simon the Canaanite, and Thaddæus, who had been dead some time, rose from their graves and travelled to Bethlehem.

They might well be astonished at the change they experienced, but the Holy Spirit told them, "Don't think this is the last resurrection ; you are raised that you may go and give honour to the mother of our Lord, who is on the point of going up into heaven." They were all, whether just before living or dead, miraculously conveyed to the

* A place near Rome ; one MS. calls it Tiberis.

Virgin's dwelling, being snatched up into the clouds ; and among them was Mark the Evangelist, brought all the way from the city of Alexandria. When they came into the Virgin's chamber she sat up in bed and told them not to fear and grieve, for God was about to take her out of the world to His own glory. Then each related how he had been brought into her presence.

“Just as I was going to worship at Ephesus,” said John, “the Holy Spirit told me the departure of the mother of my Lord was at hand, and I must go to Bethlehem to salute her.” The rest used similar words, all saying her death had been foretold, and that they had been snatched up into chariots of clouds to perform their wondrous pilgrimage. Matthew added, “I glorify God because when I was in a boat, and overtaken by a storm, on a sudden a burst of light overshadowing the stormy billows changed the sea into a calm, and taking me up, set me down beside you.” When they had prayed, there came thunder, and a noise as of chariots, with a multitude of angels, and a voice was heard, like that of the Son of man. The seraphim, in a circle, surrounded the dwelling, and the sun and the moon suddenly burst forth with a wonderful brightness. Crowds from Jerusalem and other places came together, having heard what had happened. They were cured of diseases from which

they suffered. All Jerusalem kept high festival, singing psalms and songs. Priests were astonished, and were moved with hatred. Many Jews walked from Jerusalem to Bethlehem; and it came to pass that when about a mile off they were suddenly stopped. Their feet seemed nailed to the ground, and they saw a fearful vision. "We have been ruined by this woman," cried the crowd, boiling with rage; "chase her from Bethlehem; send to the Roman governor to take her." The apostles then went from the house, carrying Mary on her couch, and for five days they continued singing songs of praise. When the soldiers sent by the governor reached Bethlehem, they found no one in the house where she had been. All was empty. Then they heard she had been taken to Jerusalem. The priests and the people tried to burn down the dwelling she had occupied. Instead, however, of their destroying it, a fire came and destroyed them. Whereupon great fear fell upon the city, and people glorified God; the governor himself saying, "He who was born of the Virgin is the Son of God.

The Spirit told the apostles: "You know it was on the Lord's day the archangel Gabriel came to Mary; also, on the Lord's day, Jesus was born; further, on the Lord's day the children of Jerusalem met Him with palm branches; on the Lord's day, too, He rose from the dead; and on the Lord's day He will come

and judge the world. In like manner, on the Lord's day He now descends from heaven for the Virgin who brought Him forth." Whilst the company joined in praying, a stream of light fell upon her face, and the heavenly inhabitants united in adoration. Jesus Himself spake, saying, "Mary!" and she answered, "Here am I." Looking up, she saw an indescribable glory around her Son. "Thy body," He added, "will be transferred to paradise, and thy soul to the Heaven of heavens." "Lay thy right hand on me, and bless me," said the mother; and He did so. Then, kissing His hand, she continued to pray. Peter began singing, and Heaven echoed back the song. Mary's face now shone brighter than ever; and she rose up and blessed all who were in her presence. Jesus, once more stretching forth His hand, lifted her up, that where He was she might be also. The place became filled with light and fragrance, when Peter, John, Paul, and Thomas approached, and folded a mantle over her feet. After this the twelve carried her out. But some one touched her remains irreverently, upon which a flaming sword cut off his hands; they were afterwards miraculously healed, through Peter's intercession. The body was laid in Gethsemane, where for three days perfumes were shed over the earth, and strains of music fell from Heaven. A cloud afterwards guided the apostles to Bethlehem, and thence back to the several countries whence they came.

All this and much more may be read in a translation of several apocryphal gospels contained in Clarke's "Ante-Nicene Library."

The contrast between New Testament simplicity and reserve, and the extent and over-done minuteness of legendary accounts, is very striking, and serves to confirm our faith in Scripture. A comparison of the four Gospels with apocryphal narratives affords convincing proof of the inspiration of the four Evangelists in contrast with the wild folly which appeared after they had fallen asleep.

Reverence for womanhood, love of maiden purity and tenderness, and the creation of a feminine ideal above that of classic times, had much to do with originating the popular Madonna; and at length the vision of the glorified Church in the Apocalypse, as a woman "clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars," became identified with the Virgin, and the true assumption of the Church at the last day was lost in the false assumption of Mary.

Before closing this chapter I may state that Alban Butler, in his article on "The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin," says: "She paid the common debt of nature, none among the children of Adam being exempt from that rigorous law." But he adds: "It is an hereditary pious belief, that the body of the Blessed

Virgin was raised by God soon after her death, and assumed to glory by a singular privilege before the general resurrection of the dead." "But that this historical tradition, and pious belief or opinion, is no article of faith is proved by Baronius" and several others. The earliest circumstantial mention I can find of any festival in connection with it, is a descriptive reference to a procession at Constantinople for "*the repose*" of the Virgin, in the reign of the Eastern Emperor, Constantine VII., A.D. 912-919. Butler, however, vaguely states that the Feast of the Assumption, whatever the Assumption may mean, appears from ancient sacramentaries to have occurred in the Latin Church, before the time of Pope Sergius (A.D. 687-701), and in the Greek Church before the reign of the Emperor Maurice (A.D. 582-602).

As to the Greek text of the "Assumption of Mary," Tischendorf, who has edited it, assigns to it a date not later than the fourth century. A book under that title was condemned by a decree of Gelasius (A.D. 492-496).

CHAPTER II.

THE TWELVE.

“ In the New Jerusalem
Twelve foundations firm are laid ;
On the Apostles of the Lamb
Is the glorious structure stayed.

“ Firmly built on them may we,
Bound to Christ our Corner-Stone,
In the heavenly temple be,
One in heart, in doctrine one.”

DEAN ALFORD.

CHAPTER II.

THE TWELVE.

TRADITIONS of the twelve are closely connected with traditions of the Madonna. We have seen how the apostles are said to gather round her death-bed. They came from different countries where they had preached the Gospel, and in respect to their going forth on missionary errands, we have the following stories.

They by lot divided the world amongst them. Peter was to go to Antioch; James the Less to remain at Jerusalem; Philip to labour in Phrygia; John in Ephesus; Thomas in Parthia; Andrew in Scythia; and Bartholomew in Judæa and India. Simon Zelotes went to Egypt and Cyrene; Jude, thought to be the same as Thaddeus, to Edessa; Matthew to Ethiopia; and Matthias to the same country, or Cappadocia. Accounts are obscure and conflicting with regard to the destination of some of the twelve. James the Great, it will be remembered, had been slain by Herod; the Betrayer had hanged himself.

In the city of Treves is a beautiful church built on the plan of a Greek cross. It has aisles all round; and there are twelve columns supporting a lantern in the centre. All can be seen at a glance when a person is standing at one particular point. Each column has painted on it the figure of an apostle, with a part of the Apostles' Creed attached to his name. To Peter belongs the commencement, "I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth"; to Andrew the words, "And in Jesus Christ His only Son our Lord." St. James the Great has, "Who was conceived of the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary." John is connected with the words, "Suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried." Thomas with the clause, "He descended into hell, and rose again the third day." James the Less points to the sentence, "He ascended into heaven, and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty." Philip adds, "Whence He will come to judge the quick and the dead." Bartholomew declares, "I believe in the Holy Ghost." Matthew adds, "The Holy Catholic Church." Simon, "The communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins." Thaddeus, "The resurrection of the body." Matthias gives the closing words, "And the life everlasting." This architectural device, with its twelve inscriptions, embodies a legend, which seems intended to show that the apostles shared amongst

them the great truths of the Gospel, which were foundation stones of the Church. They united in proclaiming one harmonious creed, though each might dwell most upon some particular part. They did not contradict, but all joined in supporting each other. Tradition says that the articles were contributed by every apostle in order. But we know whilst creeds—some longer, some shorter—are very ancient, that which is called the “Apostles’ Creed” did not exist in its present form until about the beginning of the fifth century. Preceding confessions of faith, however, were the same in substance.

Fictions, in the shape of novels and romances, so abundant in the present day, were by no means uncommon in early ages. Nor were they confined to what is called profane literature. Religious stories were popular in the Christian Church. Historical accuracy was not in demand, people did not care about it, and writers were by no means particular as to what they wrote. Sometimes they worked up a few facts, which they had heard or read, into narratives, which blended a little truth with a great deal of what is untrue. Some books were full of pure imagination. With reference to the Apostles, there are two works still in existence of early but uncertain date, entitled “The Recognitions of Clement” and “The Clementine Homilies.” “The

Recognitions" form a sort of autobiography professedly written by Clement of Rome, giving a dull and tedious account of Peter, James, Barnabas, Aquila, Simon Magus, and others. They include a strange story of some beggar woman who had twins, and was shipwrecked, but who marvellously escaped; then in the presence of the Apostle Peter she recognised Clement as a lost son. Hence the name of the book. There are other "recognitions" of people supposed to be lost. "The Homilies" tell in substance the same story as "The Recognitions"; also they deal largely in doctrinal disputes; some of them express heretical opinions.

As to Peter, he appears instructing Clement, and entering into a dispute with Simon Magus. A vivid picture is painted in this and other legends of Peter's conflict with this famous magician. He is vanquished by the Apostle, flings his books into the Dead Sea, breaks his wand, and flees to Rome, where he returns to his old craft. After two years Peter meets him in the imperial city. Simon pretends to be a god, and the Apostle challenges him to work a miracle. He makes attempts, but cannot succeed, and, at the same time, Peter raises a dead youth to life. Then Simon undertakes to fly up into the sky in the sight of the emperor and the citizens. Crowning himself with laurel, he climbs a lofty tower, and throwing himself into the air

floats awhile ; but the Apostle, on his knees, commands the demons who hold the impostor up to let go, whereupon the latter falls to the ground, and is dashed to pieces. So firmly is this tradition believed, that the impress of the Apostle's knee on the ground, as he knelt in prayer, is pointed out near the Roman Forum. The incidents now related are represented in old pictures.

One striking legend of Peter has in it much poetical beauty. Peter did not deny his Lord again, but he fled from Rome at the approach of persecution. He hurried along the Appian Way for two miles, when he saw his Lord and Master going towards the city gate. Startled at the vision, he exclaimed, "Lord, whither goest Thou?" to which Christ replied, with a loving sadness, "I go to be crucified a second time." A little church built by the wayside, and called by the name of *Domine quo vadis*, is a memorial of the tradition.

Peter and Paul are united in the Roman legends of their martyrdom. A belief that Peter suffered in Rome by no means requires a belief that he was bishop in that city ; and many Protestants allow the probability of the two apostles having been imprisoned in the dungeon of the Mammertine prison, near one of the ascents to the Capitol. It is a dismal place, and a fountain is shown which you are told miraculously sprang up for the baptism of

two centurions, whom the apostles converted by their preaching. Tradition says Peter was crucified with his head downwards, because he deemed it too great an honour to be crucified in the same way as his Master was. The legend of St. Paul's death I shall mention hereafter.

As in the case of the Virgin, so in that of the apostles, when passing from the truthful Scriptures to legendary inventions, we are conscious of a very deep descent. We exchange solid ground for marshy paths, and find ourselves at times slipping into what is downright caricature. Extravagances appear which dishonour the holy men they were intended to exalt and glorify. The Spanish stories of James the Great, as he is called, pre-eminently illustrate what I now notice.

They tell us that after the Ascension he visited the peninsula, having received the Virgin's benediction and command for that purpose. She said, "Go, my son, fulfil the command of thy Master, and remember, that in one of the cities of Spain where thou shalt convert the greatest number of men to the faith, thou erect a church in my name." He came to Zaragoza, and preached there many days, turning eight men to the faith of Jesus. That they might be better instructed, they retired to the banks of the river Ebro, where, St. James being with them, they heard one night the

voices of angels singing the *Ave Maria*. The Apostle knelt down, and saw the mother of our Lord standing on a pillar of white marble, surrounded by a company of angels. "Here, son James," she said, "is the place where a church must be built to my honour."

After his return from Spain, the Apostle, being taken to Jerusalem, where he received martyrdom, knelt down, and stretching out his neck, said, "Let the earth receive this, my body, which is made of earth, in the hope of resurrection; and may Heaven receive my immortal soul." The executioner drew his sword, and cut off the Apostle's head. But the head did not fall; the Apostle himself took it up in his own hand, and held it till evening, when his disciples came for the body. The disciples carried it to Joppa, and placed it in a ship miraculously provided. The body reached Spain, an angel of the Lord going before it all the way. The first place where it came was El Padron, the next Santiago, or Compostella, where it lies in a supernaturally formed ark. The memory of it being forgotten for five hundred years,—some say eight hundred,—it was recovered through a light seen shining on the mountains. A thick wood had grown over the grave, but when the wood was cleared away a little hollow place appeared, with a marble coffin containing the body.

It seems incredible that such stories should find an accepted place in Spanish history, but they do. They are sanctioned by Morales and by Pedro de Medina. The absurd belief in the miraculous column at Zaragoza, and in the Apostle's remains at Compostella, is based upon these legends; and to this day they are sanctioned by Spanish Catholic priests.

Santiago is the patron saint of the Spaniards, and no less than thirty-eight apparitions of him are believed to have taken place at the head of victorious armies—like Castor and Pollux, who led the Romans at the battle of Regillus. Stories are told of his miracles, too stupid, one would think, for anybody to believe, yet they figure in Spanish and Italian art. A German, it is said, with his wife and son, went on a pilgrimage to Compostella, and lodged at an inn, where the son did not respond to the affection of the host's daughter. To be revenged, she brought about his death. Afterwards he appeared to his mother, saying he was happy in heaven, with the blessed St. James. The woman went to the judge, and said, "Our son still lives." "No more than these fowls on the table," said his lordship, who was sitting at dinner. The cock then on the dish immediately rose up and crowed. The young man, who had been hanged, was restored to life. All this is represented with ludicrous gravity in existing pictures.

A legend of Thomas belongs to a different order.

King Gondoforus sent to him when in Cæsarea, and told him to build a palace, for which he gave him plenty of money. The king went away for two years, and when he came back wanted to know how the building had gone on. There was no building to be seen, for the Apostle had used the money to help the poor and the sick. The king was very angry, and threw Thomas into prison. Presently the king's brother died, but afterwards appeared to him, saying he had seen a wondrous palace of gold, silver, and precious stones built up in Paradise; and the architect was St. Thomas. The king's riches he had sent above, through alms deeds to the poor. He had laid up treasure in heaven. The king then set the Apostle at liberty, who told him there were celestial palaces better than any earthly ones, being built by faith and charity. Probably this was simply meant to illustrate and enforce the words, "Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness, that when ye fail they may receive you into everlasting habitations."

Another legend of the Apostle Thomas is better known, and is familiar to all who are familiar with foreign pictures. When the Virgin had ascended to heaven in the sight of the apostles, Thomas was absent; and returning to his brethren at the end of three days, was doubtful when they told him of her translation to glory. The Virgin knew of it, and

pitied the doubter ; so she dropped down her girdle into his hands to assure him of what he had heard. Florence has several representations of the story, and at Prato, a short distance off, the pretended girdle is shown every year from a pulpit of the Duomo, much to the wonder, if not the edification, of multitudes.

A small amount of tradition gathers round the name of Philip. He is said to have found at Hieropolis, in Phrygia, a people devoted to serpent worship, and taking compassion on them he drove away, through the power of the cross, a great dragon, which destroyed the inhabitants, and, amongst the rest, the king's own son. He was restored to life by the miraculous instrumentality of the Apostle. Perhaps this was only a symbolical way of representing the spiritual effect of Philip's preaching in the suppression of idolatry and the salvation of souls. The dragon we shall often meet with ; at all events, the legend exhibits the pagan priests conspiring against the Apostle, and it shows how, he being bound to a cross, they stoned him to death.

Still less is said about Bartholomew, who, we are told, was first flayed and then crucified.

Not much is on record respecting Simon Zelotes and Jude. Sometimes they have been identified with two of the shepherds, who listened to the

angels' song. When that is the case, they appear in legendary art as men advanced in life. At other times they are depicted as young, being the brethren of our Lord ; in this relation they become very beautiful. They are also painted as children, together with James, the son of Cleophas, and James and John, sons of Salome, all grouped around the infant Saviour, the artist thus suggesting the sanctification of childhood by the Divine incarnation.

John, the beloved disciple, occupies a conspicuous place in both legendary art and literature. The story of John the robber is related by Eusebius. I abridge his narrative.

St. John saw a youth of fine stature, graceful countenance, and ardent mind, whom he designated to the Christian ministry. The youth was committed to a presbyter who educated, restrained, and cherished him. After this, he relaxed his former care and vigilance. Soon certain dissolute fellows, familiar with wickedness, attached themselves to him, and led him into expensive indulgences. Going out at night to plunder, they took him with them, and encouraged him to adopt their ways. He became like an unbridled steed that has struck out of the right way, biting the curb, and rushing towards a precipice. At length he committed a great crime, and went on from bad to worse. Taking his associates, and forming them

into a band of robbers, they chose him for captain, and he surpassed them all in violence. In process of time St. John said to the bishop to whose care he had entrusted the promising youth, "Come, return me my deposit, which Christ and I committed to thee." The bishop was confounded. St. John proceeded, "I demand the young man." The bishop, groaning and weeping, said, "He is dead." "How? In what way?" "He is dead to God," he replied. "He has turned out wicked, and abandoned, and at last a robber; and now he has beset the mountain with a band like himself." The Apostle, on hearing this, tore his garment, and said, "I left a fine keeper of a brother's soul! But let a horse now be got ready, and some one to guide me on my way." He rode from the church, and coming into the country, was taken prisoner by an outguard of the banditti. He neither attempted to flee, nor refused to be seized; but cried out, "For this very purpose am I come; conduct me to your captain." The captain, in the meanwhile, stood waiting, armed as he was. But when he recognised John advancing, overcome with shame, he attempted to flee. The Apostle, however, pursued him, forgetful of his age, and crying out, "Why dost thou fly, my son, from me thy father; thy defenceless, aged father? Have compassion on me, my son; fear not. Thou still hast hope of life. I will inter-

cede with Christ for Thee. Should it be necessary, I will cheerfully suffer death for thee, as Christ for us. I will give my life for thine. Stay, believe Christ hath sent me." Hearing this, the fugitive stopped, threw away his weapons, and embracing the Apostle as he came up, pleaded for himself with much lamentation. Then the Apostle solemnly assured him that he had found pardon for him at the hands of Christ. He kissed the robber's right hand as cleansed from all iniquity, and conducted him back to the church he had forsaken.

Irenæus relates the story of Cerinthus in the bath, saying, "There are those who heard from Polycarp that John, the disciple of the Lord, going to bathe at Ephesus, and perceiving Cerinthus in the bath, rushed out of the place, exclaiming, 'Let us fly lest the bath house fall while the enemy of truth is within.'" We cannot say whether this was intended to embody the sentiment, "If there come any unto you and bring not this doctrine (the doctrine of Christ), receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed; for he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds;" or whether it recorded a literal fact, in harmony with the Apostle's zeal for truth, and his hatred of moral evil, which marked the conduct of some heretics. In either case, it reflects the early temper of the Church.

Another story is to this effect, that on returning

from Patmos to Ephesus he met at the gate a funeral. "Who is dead?" he asked. "Drusiana," the mourners replied. Now Drusiana had been his hostess in that city, and was famous for good works. So he ordered the bier to be set down and by his prayer obtained her restoration to life. When she arose John accompanied her to her house, and again dwelt there. Also it is recorded that two young men, who had sold their possessions to follow Christ, repented of what they had done. He sent them to gather pebbles, which he turned into gold. "Take back your riches," he said, "and enjoy them on earth, as you are sorry for having sent them to heaven." The moral of this is plain.

The tradition related by Jerome is very popular. In his old age John liked to be carried into the church at Ephesus that he might say to the disciples, "Little children, love one another."

Another story not so popular is perhaps surprising to some. A huntsman, with bow and arrows, passing by, saw the evangelist gently stroking a partridge, and expressed astonishment at finding him so employed, exclaiming, "Art thou that John of glorious renown? Why then enjoy a pleasure so humble?" "What hast thou in thy hand?" he rejoined. "A bow." "And why not always keep it bent?" "Because it would lose strength, and relax through constant straining." "Then let not what I am

doing, young man, offend thee ; without something of this sort the spirit would flag, and not answer to the call of duty." Herodotus tells a like story of an Egyptian king, and the story of John may be only an imitation of that.

I add one legend more : " Being on the verge of ninety, he ascended a lofty mountain after praying his disciples to dig for him in the church a deep grave. Finding on his return that his followers had yielded to his prayer, he threw his mantle into the opening, and, descending, composed himself there to sleep. His disciples, after a time, judged that he was dead, and as the morning broke a crowd gathered to see the body. But when the disciples looked into the grave St. John had disappeared, and nothing but his sandals betrayed that he had once been there."

Mark, though not of the twelve, appears in the Acts of the Apostles doing evangelistic work. Tradition says that he was converted by St. Peter, and accompanied him to Rome, where he wrote the second Gospel ; that he was put to death by being dragged over jagged rocks ; and that the vengeance of Heaven overtook his murderers.

Venice is filled with the glory of this evangelist. He is seen in the mosaic over the main door of the Duomo, and Gentile Bellini, in a charmingly quaint picture at Milan, portrays him preaching in Alex-

andria. Crowds of turbaned Orientals are seen listening in front, as the preacher stands on a platform, and a mosque-like building forms the background. We are told that he saw a shoemaker who had pierced his hand with an awl whilst mending a shoe. Mark healed the wound, and converted the cobbler, who afterwards became Bishop of Alexandria ;—in other words, the pastor of a humble congregation in some obscure part of the proud city. A popular legend of the finding of his corpse at Alexandria enclosed in a column is embodied in a mosaic in one of the transepts of the Duomo at Venice.

The legend of Mark and the ring is too long to be told here in its picturesque details. The following is the substance. In February 1340 there was a terrific storm in the Gulf of Venice. A fisherman was asked by a stranger to row him over to San Georgio Maggiore. He did so, and the stranger, as he landed, was joined by another, who asked to be rowed to the Lido. There came a third, who asked to be rowed beyond the two castles. The boatman, at the hazard of his life, carried all three to these spots. The third and last told him he was St. Mark, protector of the city, and gave him a ring worth five ducats, which he was to convey to the Doge, who would give him the money for it. It proved to be the very ring which had been kept in St. Mark's treasury, and was now found to be missing there.

The twelve apostles formed what was truly the family of our Lord when on earth. They were His brethren. They lived with Him in fellowship, preparing for after work. First *called*, they were then *sent*. First *disciples*, they became *apostles*. And whilst they lived with Him, they were the real "holy family." But there was another family, bound together by natural ties, and visited by our Lord. Mary, Martha, and Lazarus are represented, visiting the coast of southern France, and preaching the Gospel there. They come before us as founders of certain mother Churches in that part of the world. Mary of Bethany has been strangely identified with Mary of Magdala. She is described as having in early days fallen a prey to Satan. Great Eastern fathers thought otherwise; and to most people the identification appears unfounded and revolting. The identification must be kept in mind, in order to understand the legend, which I now give, shorn of some extravagant accessions, as related by a French writer in a History of Avignon.* He renders it in a form more brief than we find it in Mrs. Jameson's "Legendary Art."

"Martha, born of rich and noble parents, but more celebrated for her hospitality to our Lord Jesus Christ, was, after His ascension, seized by the Jews, with her brother and sister, and Marcella, their maid; as well as Maximin, one of the seventy-two disciples

* "Précis de L'Histoire d'Avignon," 1852.

of Jesus, who had baptized the whole household, and many other Christians. . . . They were put into a ship, without sails or oars, and left to certain shipwreck on the open sea. But, guided by the hand of God, the ship bore them safely to Marseilles where it ran aground.

“This miracle and their preaching converted the inhabitants of Marseilles, besides those of Aix and the neighbouring provinces, to the Christian faith. . . . Lazarus was elected Bishop of Marseilles, and Maximin of Aix. . . . Mary, who was accustomed to pray and to sit at the feet of the Lord, wishing to enjoy contemplation of heavenly blessedness,—that better part, which she had chosen,—retired into a large cave in a very high mountain ; where she lived for thirty years, entirely separate from men, and was every day raised on high by angels to hear the music of the heavenly choir.

“As for Martha, after having been the love and admiration of the inhabitants of Marseilles, through the holiness and splendour of her life, she retired to a place far removed from men, with a few women of the greatest piety ; she lived there a long while, in wisdom, holy zeal, and fervour, and at last, after having foretold her death long beforehand, and having performed several famous miracles, she passed away to the Lord on the fourth of the calends of August. . . . Her body is in great veneration at Tarascon.”

The author believes that so much as appears in these lines is credible history; but the earliest document he can cite in evidence is a life of Saint Mary Magdalene, written in the fifth or sixth century—a poor voucher indeed.

Gregory of Tours shakes all faith in the story that Mary Magdalene died in France, and that her remains were discovered in the thirteenth century at a place now called St. Maximins; for he distinctly states that she accompanied the Virgin and St. John to Ephesus, and died and was buried in that city. As to the incidents of the French legend there is no historical basis whatever.

The legend grew into larger dimensions in the course of the Middle Ages, and it formed a favourite subject for painters then and afterwards. The cave which was the scene of the Magdalene's penitence is the site of a convent, which was once frequented by pilgrims. Cedon, said to be a blind man, whom Christ restored to sight, and Marcella, the handmaid, who attended the sisters, were companions of the family. Mary preached to the people, rebuking their idolatries; and by her eloquence, together with the miracles she and her sister wrought, converted the people to Christianity. Then came her retirement to the cave, where she lived more in heaven than on earth, and saw what it is impossible to utter.

Wonders also gather round the memory of

Martha. There was a dragon which infested the banks of the Rhone, near Tarascon, a place which is said to derive its name from a Greek word signifying to trouble and disturb; and which is ingeniously connected with the existence of such a monster. The dragon preyed on human flesh, and terribly frightened the people thereabouts; but Martha delivered them from the pest, conquering the enemy by a crucifix, and leading the monster off triumphantly, bound by no other chain than her own frail girdle. The achievement was celebrated at a recent date by a procession of the clergy, who escorted through the town a canvas figure of the captured dragon. I have visited the Church of St. Martha in Tarascon, and seen her shrine in the crypt, where her effigy reclines in white marble, and the traditions respecting her are embodied in bas-reliefs.

CHAPTER III.

FEMALE MARTYRS.

“ When persecution’s torrent blaze
Wrapt the unshrinking martyr’s head,
When fade all earthly flowers and bays,
When summer friends are gone and fled,
Is she alone in that dark hour,
Who owns the Lord of love and power? ”

JOHN KEBLE (*slightly altered*).

CHAPTER III.

FEMALE MARTYRS.

“THE noble army of martyrs praise Thee” has been a song of the Church from age to age: and it still carries with it the sympathy of Christian hearts. Sufferings of early confessors are glorified in ancient history and traditions, and in the paintings and statues of artistic times. Italy is filled with them. San Stefano Rotondo, at Rome, is covered with fearful scenes of agony and heroism. “It exhibits,” says Dr. Arnold, “in a series of pictures all round the church, the martyrdoms of the Christians in the so-called persecutions, with a general picture of the most eminent martyrs since the triumph of Christianity. I do not think that we consider this martyr spirit half enough.

“Pictures of martyrdoms are, I think, very wholesome—not to be sneered at, nor yet to be looked on as a mere excitement, but a sober reminder to us of what Satan can do to hurt, and what Christ’s grace can enable the weakest of His people to bear.”

Amongst martyrs were many women, married and maiden, and of these I shall give examples.

I begin with one which is not legendary, but historical, being found amongst authentic accounts preserved in the work of Eusebius.

A pious woman lived on the banks of the Rhone, and her name was Blandina. She had a family of children, whom she brought up in the faith.

She dearly loved them, and they dearly loved her. Being converted to the Gospel, she was bold in professing it. A dreadful persecution raged in Lyons and Vienne. The rulers tried to stamp out Christianity. Emperors and magistrates were in league against it, and good men and women were dragged to the Forum, and accused of having broken Imperial laws because they would not honour Emperors and heathen gods. They were mobbed by the populace, stoned in the streets, plundered of their property, and shut up in prison. Blandina, being known by many, came in for a large share of persecution; but she was filled with such power, that her tormentors, who were at work day and night, confessed that they had nothing more they could inflict.

She, together with three other Christians, named Maturus, Sanctus, and Attalus, were led into the amphitheatre, filled with people who delighted in blood. Blandina was bound to a stake; but the beasts would not touch her.

On the last day of the shows she was again brought forth, with Ponticus, a boy of about fifteen. Her persecutors wanted them to swear by the gods, and hoped that when they saw how others of the same faith were tortured they would be frightened and give in. They were not frightened, because they felt that Christ was with them ; they would not give in, because He told them to be faithful unto death. "The blessed Blandina," says the original account, "as a noble mother, who had encouraged her children and sent them home to the great King, as His victorious soldiers, retraced their conflicts, and hastened with joy to meet Him, as if invited to a marriage feast." After being scourged and scorched, she was bound in a net, and thrown to a bull, which tossed and tore her body till she became insensible, and then died.

During a persecution under Severus, at the beginning of the third century, there was a lady named Perpetua, married to a man of quality. Her father was a pagan. Her mother was probably a Christian. One of her brothers was so also ; the other was a catechumen. "Can that vessel," she asked her father, "change its name ? Neither can I call myself other than I am—a Christian."

Dreams are prominent in her story. She saw a golden ladder reaching from earth to heaven, and on each side of it a row of swords, knives, and

hooks. At the foot lay a dragon. She saw her brother climbing up, till he reached the top, and then he said, "Perpetua, I will wait for you; beware of the dragon." She replied, "In the name of the Lord Jesus he shall not hurt me." She bruised the monster's head, and rose, step by step, till she reached the top. There she saw a garden, and in the middle of it a stately man, like a shepherd, with white hair. He was milking a flock, and was surrounded by thousands in white raiment. He called Perpetua, and offered her milk to drink. She related the vision to her brother, and they both concluded they were doomed to martyrdom. When she was summoned before the judges, and imprisoned, nothing troubled her more than the entreaties of her parent. "Daughter, have pity on my grey hairs, have compassion on your father, if I yet deserve to be called your father. Have respect for your mother and your aunt. Have compassion on the child who cannot survive you." He took her hands and kissed them, and then threw himself at her feet. "Father, grieve not," she answered, "nothing will happen but what pleases God; we are not at our own disposal."

When standing before the judge, she was asked, "What, will neither the grey hairs of a father nor the tender innocence of a child move you?" "Sacrifice for the prosperity of the Emperor!" she replied;

“I will not do it.” “Are you then a Christian?”
“Yes, I am.”

She had other dreams. In one of them she beheld a deacon of the Church clothed in a white robe, embroidered with golden pomegranates, who said, “I will be with you in a moment, and bear part in your pains.” Next came a troop of youths, and one in rich apparel, who offered a branch of golden apples, which was to be her prize if she vanquished a fierce Egyptian who waited to attack her. She conquered him, and the apple bough was hers. This dream she took to be a pledge of what would follow when she was thrown to the wild beasts. She conquered them, but was slain by a gladiator.

The story of Felicitas and her seven sons is found in old martyrologies, but has no such authority for it as that just related.

Felicitas was a Roman lady who embraced the Gospel, and, being left a widow, resolved not to marry again. Her character had such an effect that many of her friends became Christians. This made the pagan priests very angry, and they demanded she should be made an example of. The Prefect privately endeavoured to make her recant, but she stood firm.

“Do not think to frighten me,” she said, “by threats, or to win me by fair speeches. The Spirit of God will not allow me to be overcome, but will make me victorious.” She had seven sons like her-

self, strong in faith, and the Prefect tried to work on her feelings by telling her that she would involve them in her own misery. "My children," she replied, "will live for ever with Christ if they be faithful. They will die eternally if they sacrifice to idols." The whole family were summoned before the magistrate, and she was implored to have pity on her children. Turning to them she gave this exhortation: "Look up to heaven, where Christ expects you. Be faithful to His love, and fight valiantly for your own souls." The seven sons were entreated to save their lives by cleaving to the religion of their country, but all in vain. They were whipped and sent back to prison, after which each of them endured a dreadful death. One was scourged till he expired; two were beaten with clubs till there was no life left; the fourth was hurled from a precipice and dashed to pieces; the three youngest were beheaded; and at last the mother followed the sons in the path of martyrdom.

The resemblance between this legend and the story in the Apocrypha of the mother of the Maccabees is manifest; and in Church poetry the two matrons are blended under one name. But this does not disprove that a martyrdom of the kind really occurred in the early Church. It was not unnatural to speak of the latter in language borrowed from the former.

From married I turn to maiden confessors. One of the oldest apocryphal books goes by the name of "The Acts of Paul and Thecla." We may hesitate to trust this guide ; but it shows what was believed about a lady who is said to have been the Apostle's companion.

A certain person named Onesiphorus, hearing that Paul had come to Iconium, went out with his family to meet him. On the road to Lystra he saw a bald-headed man, small in stature, and bandy-legged, yet, on the whole, well made and graceful, with a large nose, and eyebrows which met together. This was Paul the Apostle. While he was talking in the house of Onesiphorus, a virgin, named Thecla, betrothed to one named Thamyris, sat and listened. She could do nothing afterwards but think of the stranger and his wonderful words. The story says, oddly enough, repeating the language of her mother: "She was tied to the window like a spider, and laid hold of all that Paul said." Thamyris did not like this, especially when he found that Thecla chose to lead a single life. So the lover went to the house of Onesiphorus with a great company, and cried, "Away with this magician!" Paul was sent to prison ; Thecla gained admission to his cell, and sat down at his feet, to hear more of his teaching. This visit brought her into trouble, and she was taken before

the magistrate. Her mother turned against her. She was brought to the stake, and boys and girls heaped up faggots round her, but the fire did not burn; a cloud overshadowed the spot full of hail and rain, and put out the flames.

She accompanied Paul to Antioch after her wonderful escape, and there she, like Blandina, was thrown to the wild beasts. She, however, remained unhurt, and was set at liberty. She visited her mother at Iconium after Thamyris, her lover, was dead, and she exclaimed: "My mother, canst thou disbelieve that the Lord liveth in the heavens? For whether thou desirest wealth God gives it through me, or the restoration of thy daughter, here am I at thy side." Having thus testified, she departed to Selucia, and dwelt in a cave seventy-two years, living upon herbs and water. And she enlightened many by the Word of God. She departed to Rome to see the Apostle, and found he had fallen asleep. After staying a little while, she, too, fell asleep, and was buried, not far from her loved master's grave.

Amongst female martyrs is a maiden named Euphemia. She is represented in the church of Apollinare Nuovo at Ravenna, at the head of a long procession of virgins carrying crowns, with the Madonna waiting to receive them. She is known chiefly through a sermon about her preached by a

bishop in Pontus, who lived in the fourth century. He displayed a picture, to which he referred in his discourse, showing her beauty, grace, and modesty. She was represented in it as tortured by executioners, who seized her hair, and struck her mouth with a wooden mallet. Condemned to be burnt, she found the flames made harmless by a Divine power. Afterwards, when thrown to lions in the arena, they sat down and licked her feet. At last she was put to death by the sword. These particulars resemble those related by Thecla, and indeed, in many martyrologies, similar incidents occur over and over again.

St. Catherine, with her four wheels, full of sharp spikes, emblems of the torment she endured, is familiar to all who are versed in legendary art. She was one of the richest and noblest ladies of Alexandria, and was renowned for great learning, that city being famous for its schools and libraries. The tyrant Maximin, falling in love with her, wished she would live with him; this she felt determined not to do. He sent her into banishment. A long story is told of her being a king's daughter, and how she resolved to marry no one who was not worthy of her. To this end she consulted her lords and counsellors, who said that such a husband as she desired there never was, and never would be. A hermit received a message from the Virgin, who

meant that Catherine should be married to her only Son, Jesus Christ, whereupon she was carried up into heaven, and saw the Virgin, who presented her to the Lord.

Jesus betrothed Himself to her with a sacred ring. The Emperor, notwithstanding, resolved to have her, and, when refused, commanded her to be cast into a dungeon, which became filled with light and fragrance. She was sentenced to be broken on wheels, when fire consumed the instruments of torture, and she was beheaded. After her death she was carried to the top of Mount Sinai, where the angels buried her. Poets and painters have delighted in the picturesque legend, but some learned men are ashamed of it. Butler says: "Her acts are so much adulterated, that little use can be made of them." He quotes with approval the words of an Archbishop respecting Catherine's translation. "As to what is said that the body of this saint was conveyed by angels to Mount Sinai, the meaning is that it was carried by the monks of Sinai to their monastery, that they might devoutly enrich their dwelling with such treasure. It is well known that the name of an angelical habit was used for a monastic habit, and that monks, on account of their heavenly purity and functions, were anciently called angels." This is a rationalistic kind of dealing with legends, which would explain away a good

many of them. As to the translation of Catherine, it is most likely a dream, or simply a poetical invention. The whole story reads like a fable, but, after all, there is a touch of spiritual beauty in the idea of a soul being wedded to Christ, though not after the fashion described in the legend.*

The legend of St. Agnes is so like that of Thecla in some parts, and so like that of Catherine in others, especially as to union with Christ, that one seems to have been taken from the other. Agnes was very beautiful, and had a lover whom she rejected, because already betrothed to one fairer than the children of men. To him she pledged her faith. He crowned her with jewels, compared with which gold is dross.

* The union of a soul to Christ, under the image of a betrothal or marriage, appears both in the Old Testament and the New; and it seems to have been an idea much in favour with legendary authors. An instance of it is founded in a later legend, that of a sultan's daughter. She "walked in her father's garden, gathering bright flowers, full of dew, wondering more and more who was the Master of the flowers. 'In my heart,' she said, 'I love Him, and for Him would leave my father's palace to labour in His garden.' Jesus stood before her window. She opened the door. He said, 'I am the Master of the flowers. My garden is in Paradise, and if thou wilt go with Me, thy bridal garment shall be of bright red flowers.' Then he took from his finger a golden ring, and asked the sultan's daughter if she would be His bride." So runs the story in Longfellow's "Golden Legend."

She was threatened with a horrid death. Shut up in her chamber, she saw a white and shining robe, in which she clothed herself, saying, "I thank Thee, O Lord, that I am worthy to put on the garments of Thy elect." Her earthly lover was smitten with blindness, but recovered sight in answer to her prayer. She was sent to the stake like Thecla, like Euphemia, but the flames were extinguished; the executioner then slew her with a sword. She appeared after death to her relations, with a lamb by her side whiter than snow; and she said, "Weep not, dry your tears, rejoice exceedingly! for a throne is prepared for me by the side of Him whom I preferred on earth before all others."

The legend of St. Cecilia is different. She was fond of music, and sang and played so delightfully, that angels came down from heaven to listen. She invented the organ, and consecrated it to the worship of God. She married a nobleman called Valerian, and inspiring him with feelings like her own, they lived together as brother and sister in the Lord. He heard delicious music in his wife's chamber, and on entering saw an angel near her, holding in his hand two crowns of roses, gathered from Paradise, and these he gave to this elect couple. He promised they should both ascend to the Divine presence, carrying palms of martyrdom. Though it was winter, the room was filled with the fragrance of

flowers. Valerian's brother was converted by witnessing these wonders. They were both sent to prison, and put to death, and Cecilia washed their bodies with tears, and buried them. When commanded to worship the gods she only smiled, and the Prefect of Rome ordered her to be thrown into a bath of boiling water, but it had no effect. So an executioner was sent to behead her ; but he was so frightened that he only wounded her neck, and left her bleeding. She survived three days, which she spent in prayer, almsgiving, and singing the praises of God. Adjoining the church of St. Cecilia in the Trastevere, Rome, are two chambers, one of them containing a Roman bath with waterpipes still preserved. There can be no doubt of their antiquity, whatever may be thought of the tradition, that it was there Cecilia was thrown into the boiling water.*

Sta. Prassede and Sta. Pudenziana are represented in an ancient mosaic—now restored, or rather replaced by a modern one glittering with gold—in the front of a church in Rome, dedicated to the latter of these saints. They appear holding vases containing the blood of martyrs, and inside the

* A story is told of the Virgin appearing to Pope Pascal, and pointing out where Cecilia was buried. She may be seen represented in marble, as she is said to have appeared when her coffin was opened in the sixteenth century.

church, as also in that of Sta. Prassede, not far off, is shown a well in which were deposited relics of departed confessors.

Pudenziana is said to have been the daughter of Pudens mentioned by Paul in his Second Epistle to Timothy, and she had a sister named Prassede. The two virgins had a baptistery in their father's house; and after his death, at the festival of Easter, they witnessed there the baptism of ninety-six neophytes. Also they held continually services of prayer and praise. In an ancient biography attributed to one called "Pastor," he says, "Pudenziana went to God." Her sister wrapped her in perfumes, and kept her concealed in the oratory. Eleven months after Novatus was interred in the church first referred to, and "died in his turn." He bequeathed his goods to Prassede, and he caused a hall in his palace to be consecrated as a baptistery. Persecution followed, and she concealed a number of believers. Some who met in the oratory of Priscilla were slain, and their bodies Prassede collected and buried in Priscilla's cemetery. "Then the virgin, worn out with sorrow, asked only for death. Her tears and prayers reached to Heaven, and fifty-four days after her brethren had suffered, she passed to God. And I, Pastor, the priest, have buried her body near that of her father, Pudens."

The legend of Ursula and the virgins of Cologne

is the most extravagant of all which have come down to us.

A certain king of Brittany had a daughter, very beautiful and very wise. She read the stars, and learnt the courses of the winds, and had by heart all which happened in the world since the days of Adam, and could repeat the writings of poets and philosophers ; above all, she was a wonderful theologian, and astonished the doctors of the Church. She was as good as she was wise, and excelled in humility, piety, and alms-deeds ; her fame filled the world.

A pagan prince wanted to marry her. Ambassadors came to make up a match, and she granted them an audience, only with the intention of declining the offers. She asked three conditions. First, that she should have ten virgins, each to bring a thousand attendants ; and also one thousand more attendants, to wait on her own person. Secondly, that she herself should remain a virgin for three years, and during that period visit holy shrines. Thirdly, that her lover should become a Christian.

These conditions were accepted. Noble virgins were found, according to the number specified, and they came to Brittany dressed in rich garments, and wearing silver and golden jewels. Nobles and knights came from all countries to see them, and to see Ursula, the bride.

She had them brought together one bright spring morning, in a green meadow covered with flowers, where she preached on the glory of God and Christ, and on the blessedness of a Christian life. They wept, and promised to lead such a life as Ursula described. She embarked on board a fleet of ships, and set sail on her voyage. No sailors were with her; the virgins managed the vessels, and steered them by Divine inspiration.

Then they went by the Rhine to Bale, and over the snow mountains of Switzerland, when six angels led the way—cutting roads, building bridges, and pitching tents every night for the accommodation of the maidens. At last they reached the Tiber, and descended the river to Rome. The bishop met them as they approached the city, and gave his benediction. They lodged in tents outside the walls. The bridegroom from Brittany came to his bride in Rome, not to be wedded, but to remain, like herself, under a vow of celibacy. After a season of persecution the band returned to Cologne, where they met with a pagan army arrayed for battle against them. The soldiers rushed on their victims. The virgins only caring to preserve their purity, submitted to death. They encouraged one another in their mortal agony; and Ursula was at last transfixed by three arrows. Her spirit ascended to Heaven; and there she and her companions, with palms in

their hands and crowns on their heads, stand for ever round the throne of the Lamb.

So runs the legend. It is remarkable how this poetical story fascinated people in the Middle Ages, and how, in art, it is painted as a series of pictures by Carpaccio, to be seen in the Academy at Venice.

Something of a parallel is found in the Danish legend of St. Sunnefa. A beautiful maiden with a number of followers—men, women, and children—embarked on board three vessels, in order that she might preserve her virgin vow. They reached Norway, and were attacked by pagans; the company sought shelter in caves, where their enemies could not follow them. Notwithstanding, they were martyred, and their souls rose to Heaven. Numerous particulars are added to the Scandinavian tale, different from what we find in the Ursula legend. There is a similar story of British maidens in Geoffrey of Monmouth. Whether the later tales were copied from the earlier, or whether they originated in a common source, it is impossible to say. In any case, they are constructed so as to honour the virtues of purity and self-sacrifice.

Martyrdom is not a peril which haunts modern Christians. Work, not suffering, is the present idea of religion. It was far otherwise fifteen or sixteen hundred years ago. Martyrdom filled the air. Some

had seen confessors yielding up their lives. Others had heard of them from eyewitnesses. Being uncritical, and having vivid imaginations, no wonder they gave credit to stories rejected in our day with utter contempt. They looked on martyrs as boys and girls do now on heroic sufferers in the midst of battles and shipwrecks.

CHAPTER IV.

ST. CHRISTOPHER.

“Among the religious parables of the Middle Ages, there is not one more fanciful and more obvious in its application than the story of St. Christopher. But, although poetical and significant as a parable, it becomes as a mere legend prosaic and puerile; it is necessary to keep the latent meaning in view while we read the story, and when we look upon the extremely picturesque representations of the Canaanitish giant; for otherwise, the peculiar superstition which has rendered him so popular and so important as a subject of art will lose all its interest.”

MRS. JAMESON.

CHAPTER IV.

ST. CHRISTOPHER.

ON the walls of many foreign churches may be seen paintings, more ugly than beautiful, of an immensely tall man, wading through deep waters, and carrying on his shoulders a little child. Paintings of the same object of a better kind are also abundant; and when rude wooden blocks were cut for printing on paper more than four hundred years ago, this tall man and tiny boy were rudely figured in tracts called "Books for the Poor." They were made a bad use of, being counted as charms against mortal danger, for they had under them these words in Latin, "In the day thou seest the face of St. Christopher, thou shalt not die an evil death." A superstition of the same sort exists in Spain at the present day, where, in a church at Madrid, I have seen sold a woodcut of the sole of the Virgin Mary's shoe, with a promise printed on it, that anybody having this relic may, by repeating a certain number of prayers to her, obtain three hundred years' relief from the consequences of sin hereafter.

Much of what is right and much of what is wrong go together in this present world, and there is a proof of it in the different ways in which pictures of Christopher are regarded. Superstitiously used by many, they embody beautiful legends, which I cannot think of without being benefited.

A man, who went by the name just mentioned, is said to have lived before the time of St. Jerome, one of the Church's fathers, who includes a Christopher in his calendar of Christian martyrs. Around this singular figure has grown up a collection of picturesque stories—outshoots, perhaps, of his name, which means one who carries Jesus Christ. I regard them as parables meant to represent a pilgrim's progress in ancient times.

He was born in the Holy Land, and remained ignorant in early life of the Saviour's Gospel. He walked up and down the hills and valleys of Judæa, not thinking at all of the Holy and Beautiful One, born at Bethlehem, Who had walked over the same hills and valleys before him. He grew up to be an enormous giant,—“twelve cubits in length,” says the legend,—surpassing Goliath of Gath, the staff of whose spear was as a weaver's beam. He was proud of his strength, and defied everybody as weak and helpless compared with himself. He declared he would serve no king, however great, who had less power, and he went about the world in search of a superior.

At length he reached the court of a prince who lived in wonderful splendour, being richer than any other sovereign. He was smitten with the glories of the royal palace, and with the beauty and strength of the monarch's person; in him he fancied he found a master, him he undertook to serve. This is the first part of the legend, and do not we see here that consciousness of physical strength, that pride in its display, and that contempt for others who are inferior, which prove snares to many who are forgetful of higher and nobler things? The worship of power in various forms, the power which comes from muscular vigour, from great wealth, from high rank, from mental ability, from extensive learning, from worldly success in divers ways, is a common kind of idolatry in this nineteenth century.

One day, as Christopher stood before this great king, he heard a minstrel singing a song about an evil spirit that did much mischief in the world, even to kings and rulers, as well as poor people. When the name of this enemy occurred in the course of the minstrel's lay the king made a sign of the cross. "What can that mean?" Christopher asked, and obtained no answer. He was determined not to be put off. "If you do not tell me," he said, "I shall leave this place." At last the king replied, "I make that sign to preserve me from the power of an evil spirit which the minstrel mentioned."

The cross of Christ truly understood is no doubt the mightiest power in the whole world, and through faith in it we may defy the devil and all his works ; but making the sign is of no use, though people in old times, and in our own, too, have been so foolish as to fancy it a charm, enough to frighten away all manner of mischief. "Oh," said Christopher, "then there is some one, after all, mightier than this mighty king ? I will go and see if I cannot find him." Away he went, not thinking for a moment of what is right and what is wrong, what is true and what is false, but swallowed up in the quest of mere greatness—a search in which poor Christopher has still hosts of followers. This is the second stage in his story.

He travelled about a long while, till, as he was crossing a wide plain, he saw a host of armed men marching behind a terrific creature, who seemed to think the whole world was his, and when Christopher, as proud as he, crossed his path, the latter asked, in lordly fashion, "Where goest thou ?" Christopher told him he was searching for one called Satan, the strongest prince in the world, and he was ready to serve him. "I am he," said the leader of the army. Whereupon Christopher fell into the ranks. He did not know who or what this bold challenger really was, only as a worshipper of strength he meant to follow him. This third step in the progress

of the legend scarcely needs an application. How many are led captive by the devil at his will through ignorance; not knowing that he is the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that worketh in the children of disobedience? On and on the grim captain went, with all his soldiers at his back, Christopher amongst the rest, till they came to four roads, and he saw a great cross standing by the wayside. At the sight of this the prince of darkness trembled, and turned in an opposite direction. "Why," asked Christopher,—who, after all, had some liking to know the reason of things, and was not now inclined blindly to follow the kingship of the merely strong,—“why?” he asked. The monster strode away in silence. “If thou tellest me not I go no further,” exclaimed Christopher. “Upon the cross Christ died, and I fear Him,” acknowledged the enemy. “Jesus, whom thou fearest, is then stronger than thou art?” argued the pilgrim. “I will go and serve Him.” So the devil departed, and the pilgrim went the opposite way, seeking after Jesus. This is the fourth chapter in the parable, and here, again, without any trouble, we get at an interpretation. What a good thing it is when young people are dissatisfied with the devil’s service, and find that there is One infinitely better, as well as infinitely stronger, and are determined to find the way which leads to Him.

Christopher now began the right sort of pilgrimage, seeking after Christ. He wandered about many days, and then came to a hermit's cell. He asked the hermit to show him the way to Jesus. The hermit did not give a wise answer. "This King, whom thou seekest," he said, "is the King of heaven and earth, and He requires of His servants hard duties. You must fast, and you must pray." This is a different answer from that which the Gospel gives through the Apostle Paul: "Through this Man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins; and by Him all that believe are justified from all things from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses."

The hermit's reply was very different from that of John the Baptist and St. Paul: "Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world." "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved."

Christopher did not like what the hermit said. "I will not fast, I cannot pray." The hermit went on to ask, "Dost thou know a wide river full of stones, and sometimes overflowing with rain, where people sink who strive to get over?" "Yes," rejoined the pilgrim. "Then," added the hermit, "since thou wilt neither fast nor pray, go and try to help people over that river. So will you be serving Christ; and in trying to serve Him He will help you." Immediately the teachable inquirer went down to the water side, and there he became a sort

of ferryman—not with a boat, but by taking up travellers on his tall shoulders, and lifting them over. And to help himself he threw out his huge arms, and plucked up by the roots a palm tree, which grew in a forest hard by, and used that as a staff, while he waded through the deep stream carrying people from one side to the other. In this way he saved many lives. This makes a fifth piece in the legend, which, though imperfect, and in some way misleading, is true thus far, that the actual service of Christ, by striving to do good in the world, helping people in their troubles, is a means of preparing for fuller light and better knowledge. Jesus Christ Himself said, “My doctrine is not Mine, but His that sent Me; if any man *will* do His *will*, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God or whether I speak of Myself.” To try and lift people over rivers of affliction in the cold dark nights of this life, is a work which will bless the doer, if done with the hope of pleasing Him. This fifth part of the legend points to something better than mere ceremonies, and it is fitted to teach that true service must and will be followed by prayer. It is well to notice that this worshipper of mere strength had begun to learn that the highest use of strength is to help, not to conquer, to save, not to destroy.

Christopher built a hut by the riverside; there he

sat by day watching for travellers, and there he slept by night ready to get up and help anybody lost in the darkness. So, once on a time, when it was stormy, he heard a child cry, "Christopher, come and help me over." He got up and looked out at the door, but saw nothing. He laid down again, and again heard the young voice, "Christopher, come and help me over." A third time the words were heard. Out came the giant to search after the child, and he found him sitting on the cold, wet bank. "Carry me over to-night," asked the little one. Christopher took him up on his broad shoulders; and, seizing the palm staff, waded into the deep flood as the waves rushed and the winds cut in his face. He had never carried one like that before. The little child weighed him down. He thought he should be crushed under the load, strong as he was. He had to lean on his huge staff to prevent his sinking. "Who art thou, child?" he asked, as he set him down on the further side. "Had I carried the world on my back it had not been so wonderful." "Wonder not, Christopher, for thou hast not only borne the world, but Him that made it. In this work thou hast sought to save Me, and I accept this service." And as a pledge, the legend tells us, the Child Christ bid Christopher plant the palm afresh, and it should bear leaves and fruit. Presently it was covered with dates, and the

child vanished. Then Christopher fell down on the ground and worshipped Christ. Power was no longer his idol. He was weaned from that idolatry, and inspired with love and gentleness. The Incarnate Saviour was his Lord and his God.

In that night's service is the origin of his lasting name. Before he had been known simply as *Offero*, a bearer. Now he obtained the title of *Christ-bearer*.

When the Martyr Ignatius appeared before the Emperor Trajan, he said, "No one ought to call Theophorus wicked. I have Christ, the King of Heaven, within me." "Who is Theophorus?" asked Trajan. "He who has Christ within his breast," was the reply. "Do you mean Who was crucified under Pontius Pilate?" "I mean Him Who bore my sin." "Dost thou carry within thee Him that was crucified?" "Truly so, for it is written, I will dwell in them and walk in them."

That history helps to explain the legend of Christopher; to carry Christ in the soul is the most precious of all burdens; for, not the burden of power, or of wealth, or of fame ennobles a man, but this makes him truly great and good, and gives him "a new name, which no man knoweth, but him that receiveth it." To carry Christ, to bear His image, to have Him, the Divine incarnation of innocence, purity, gentleness, and love, softening that which is hard, refining that which is coarse, cleansing that

which is filthy, taming that which is wild, and shedding a beautiful child life over us, so as to drive away the proud, haughty, wicked spirit which dwells within us,—this is to be in deed and in truth a Christian.*

Now it was that Christopher worshipped heartily Him whom before he had refused to worship. His pride was broken down, and a humble spirit was inspired. He went to Lycia, in Asia Minor, and there found many Christians who were suffering under persecution. They were tortured and put to death. The big giant encouraged and comforted them; and, instead of exciting them to resentment, sought to inspire them with the meek, childlike disposition which he had caught from the Child whom he had loved to carry. His sympathy with the disciples of the cross made the heathen angry, and one of them, in a great passion, struck him on the face. Had such an insult been offered him aforetime, he would immediately have struck the offender, and made him rue the assault; now he said, "If I were not a Christian, I would be avenged of that blow." He did well and suffered for it, and took it patiently, being hereunto called, "because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example

* The Golden Legend, in its characteristic quaint fashion, says he bore Christ in four ways: On his shoulders by carrying him; in his body by fasting; in his mind by devotion; in his mouth by confession and preaching.

that we should follow His steps, Who when He was reviled, reviled not again ; when He suffered He threatened not, but committed Himself to Him that judgeth righteously."

Christopher, at the same time, sought to lead other people to Christ. He converted heathens to Christianity from amongst the inhabitants of Samos. He used "the sword of the Spirit" instead of the weapons of warfare which of old he had delighted to use. In a grand old picture in the church of Ghent, in Belgium, Christopher is painted wearing a turban, and clad in a large scarlet cloak, tramping along with enormous strides, with a crowd of people, in all sorts of dresses showing their different conditions of life, following him close behind, as with one hand he grasps his palm-tree staff covered all over with fruit, and with the other hand points to the Adoration of the Lamb in the Heavenly World.

He is said to have died a martyr's death. The king of the country where he preached the Gospel sent soldiers to take him prisoner. When they arrived they found him at prayer. More came ; he was still at prayer, and they were constrained to kneel down by his side. They were willing to let him escape, but he would not. He allowed them to bind his hands behind his back. When sent to prison two women were employed to tempt him ; but he steadfastly resisted, and they were both con-

verted by his instruction and example. The king threatened them with death if they did not offer sacrifices to the gods of the country, but they refused, and when dragged into a temple, they threw their girdles round the idols, and smashed them in pieces. Both suffered martyrdom; one of them, after being first thrown into a fire which would not burn, was then beheaded. Christopher also had a miraculous deliverance from the flames and from an arrow-shot; but he also at last died by the executioner's hands. Finally, the king himself was converted to the true faith; and the legend says, in the spirit of the age when it was written, he gave commandment that "whoever blamed God or St. Christopher should be slain with the sword."

Alban Butler in his "Lives of the Saints," treats Christopher as a real person, and speaks of his relics being conveyed first to Spain, and then to France, where they are at present shown enshrined in the Abbey of St. Denis, near Paris. But he adds, "There seems no other ground than his name for the vulgar notion of his great stature, the origin of which seems to have been merely allegorical." "The enormous statues of St. Christopher still to be seen in many Gothic cathedrals expressed his allegorical wading through the sea of tribulations, by which the faithful meant to signify the many sufferings through which he arrived at eternal life."

CHAPTER V.

FAMILY ADVENTURES.

“ Thus the whole family laboured with one heart for one end, the salvation of their souls, and the glory of God ; and though separated in body, they were united in heart, and now they dwell together in the paradise of God.”

BARING GOULD.

CHAPTER V.

FAMILY ADVENTURES.

IN the city of Byzantium, in the days of Constantine the Great, there lived a happy Christian couple, named Xenophon and Mary. The husband was a senator, and attended the Emperor's court, where magnificence and splendour had attained the highest point; and in that respect little difference could be seen between Christian and pagan officers of state. The city on the Bosphorus reflected many of the bad habits of the ancient city on the Tiber; and the Emperor himself, though professedly converted to what was called the New Religion, retained much of the spirit and conduct of the old one. Xenophon and his wife, however, had not adopted the manners of the age, but lived in Christian unworldliness, distinguished by devotion and consistency.

They had two sons, "whom they loved as the apples of their eyes," and their names were John and Arcadius. These wise parents were anxious about their children's education, and they determined,

at great expense, to send the boys to Berytus, where there was a famous school for studying law, they being intended for the legal profession. Necessary arrangements were made for the purpose, and a ship was engaged to convey them to their destination. When the time for embarkation came, Xenophon was suffering from a severe and dangerous illness. The youths took leave of him at the bedside, and the good man knew not whether he should ever see them again. Journeying from one place to another was by no means easy, and communications between relatives and friends, at a distance from one another, was even more difficult; so, when time enough for the accomplishment of the voyage had expired, no tidings of the arrival of the vessel came to cheer the anxious parents.

Xenophon recovered from his illness; and he and his wife often talked together about the lads over the water; month after month passed, and not a word was told as to what had become of them.

When the couple at Byzantium could bear suspense no longer, they despatched a servant to Berytus to learn, if possible, what had become of the ship and the youths on board of it. Another period of delay raised parental solicitude to the highest pitch; at last the messenger came back. At the time of his arrival the master was from home, waiting on the

Emperor ; his wife, therefore, was the first to learn the result of the servant's inquiries. All the man had to say was that he had not been able to discover anything which threw distinct light on what had become of her sons, except that the vessel was lost, and it was to be feared they were lost also. The lady bore her trial with fortitude, and could exclaim, "The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away ; blessed be the name of the Lord."

When, in the evening, her husband returned from the imperial palace, with the accustomed official pomp through crowded streets, he was depressed at finding her grieved in spirit, for her eyes were wet with tears. She evaded his questions, but was soon constrained to say that the messenger was coming homewards : this did not pacify Xenophon at all. He felt convinced the servant must have already arrived, or at least that letters had come revealing the result of his mission ; at last he distinctly inquired, "Is it well with the boys ?" Then she told him all. His fortitude was equal to hers ; and, instead of giving way to grief, he kissed and comforted her, thanking God for giving him "such a prudent and self-constrained wife."

Still, though plunged in deep sorrow, they did not yield to despair. Their children, after all, might be alive. They determined to go and see for themselves. So they took ship to the coast of Syria.

But, with a feeling prevalent at that time, they determined first to visit the holy places where our Lord had lived and died. Accordingly, they visited Jerusalem.

Monachism had appeared in the East, and laid a strong hand upon religious minds. Self-sacrifice, so strongly enjoined in Scripture, lay at the bottom of this great movement, and it was helped, in a measure, probably by Eastern ideas of the inherent evil of matter and of its power over human nature. Indeed, the Apostle Paul had insisted upon a conflict of the spirit with the flesh, and upon the fact of the body being at the root of much sinfulness. The state of society—at that period tremendously corrupt—aided in the promotion of this increasing excitement amongst Christian people; and, through the co-operation of these several causes, many persons cultivated habits of excessive asceticism, and endeavoured to seclude themselves entirely from the world. Hermits sought out desert places, and lived a life of perfect solitude. Egypt abounded in men of this extraordinary type. The Thebiad, as it is called, became peopled with devout seekers after spiritual perfection, living apart from one another. Monasteries for large brotherhoods arose, as well as hermitages for solitary recluses; and a famous institution of that kind flourished at Bethlehem, around a cave, identified as the birthplace of our Lord. At Jerusalem, also,

there were monks, and one of them was met, in the streets of the Holy City, as the Byzantine nobleman and his wife were visiting the holy places. A monk was known at once by his mantle and cowl; and, wherever he went, he was sure to excite reverence in religious passers by. On that occasion, Xenophon went so far as to prostrate himself before this member of a popular brotherhood; but the latter implored him not to do so, when he was told in reply, that "such reverence was not shown to him as an individual, but to the holy order which he represented." What was the surprise of Xenophon when he recognised in the person of the monk no other than the very servant he had sent out with his two sons on their voyage to Berytus. Inquiries, of course, arose, and the monk told his late master that the ship which carried him and the youths had been wrecked in a storm, and nearly all hands had perished; he had wonderfully escaped, but he knew not what had become of the few survivors. He had reached Jerusalem, and there devoted himself to what was called "a religious life." This intelligence left room for hope.

The agitated parents continued their pilgrimages to sacred shrines, and their search after the lost boys. One day they visited a monastery, and fell into conversation with the abbot. They told their story, and had not reached the end, before the

good old man saw that he could throw light upon the domestic mystery. But he would not tell them at once what he knew and thought. However, he revived and strengthened the almost dying hope, and made an appointment to meet them at a certain time upon "Mount Calvary, where our Lord was crucified." He promised he would there give them some important information.

In the meanwhile, he coupled what he well knew with what it struck him was very probable. He had a young man in his own monastery, who could be no other than Arcadius, one of the lost sons. Arcadius having been wrecked, having lost all his money, having no means of reaching Berytus, and pursuing his studies, had, after his landing on the Syrian shore, like the servant, betaken himself to Jerusalem, and there sought refuge in the convent presided over by the abbot. He had found a welcome, and had told some particulars relative to his escape, which interested the reverend Father; and now, from what he had heard the parents narrate, the latter began to think of another young monk, who, he suspected, must be John, the brother of Arcadius. It so happened, soon after this interview with Xenophon, that this very youth came to Jerusalem on pilgrimage. He was sent for by the abbot, and was asked, "Brother, what is thy history? Please relate it to me." "I am," replied John, "the

son of wealthy parents, who sent me with my brother to Berytus to study law. I loved my brother as my own soul. On our voyage a storm overtook us, and the vessel was wrecked; then my brother Arcadius and I——” Here he paused; for Arcadius had entered during the conversation, and as these last words were uttered he fell down, in the deepest excitement, exclaiming, “My brother, my brother!” A recognition immediately followed. The two were so altered by the disastrous circumstances through which they had passed, and the monkish habit which each wore made such a difference in their appearance, that at first mutual recognition was impossible. Now neither of them could doubt the identity of the other. They lifted up their voices and wept, at the same time embracing one another with joy unspeakable. “Restrain yourselves at present,” said the venerable old man; “do not give way to your feelings, as it may attract attention; and, indeed, your parents themselves are so near that a sudden revelation of the secret now might be too much for them.” Whilst thus speaking, he saw Xenophon and Mary slowly walking towards Calvary, where the conversation had been going on. They were so intent on asking the all-absorbing question, “Where are our dear sons, reverend father?” that they did not see, or at least did not recognize, the two young men in monkish attire, standing behind their superior.

To prevent a scene in public, the latter said to the anxious parents, "Rejoice, my children, rejoice, and praise the Lord! Your sons are found. Now go and prepare a feast, and I will come shortly with my two disciples whom you see here; and when we have eaten I will bring your sons to your arms."

Still, the parents remained ignorant as to who the "two disciples" were; nor did they care to inquire, being so enraptured with the prospect of enfolding within their arms those of whom it might be said, "They were dead, and are alive again; they were lost, and are found."

Away went father and mother to kill the fatted calf, to make a feast of fat things; and when all preparations were completed, the guests came in, the abbot and his two disciples. Arcadius and John trembled with delight at seeing their parents once more, and had to turn aside to conceal their tears. As they ate and conversed—Xenophon and Mary patiently awaiting some grand disclosure—talk turned on the felicity of a monastic life. "Oh," said Xenophon, "how peaceful and glad are all dwelling in those blessed homes! Methinks the words of the prophet are fulfilled in such places, 'The desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose!' Right glad should I be were my dear boys to seek such consolation, and lie down in such green pastures."

“If they were to do this,” interrupted the abbot, “thou wouldst be deprived of their society.” “That matters not,” hastily rejoined the excited father; “if I could but see their faces again, and know that they had set their hearts on the service of God, I should be comforted indeed.” “Now,” said the abbot, “let one of these young monks begin and tell their story.” Arcadius commenced with faltering tongue, “I and my brother here present were born at Byzantium of good Christian parents, and the name of the one was Xenophon, and the name of the other——” It was needless to go any further. The tones of the well-remembered voice, and a scrutinizing gaze at the features, which, though altered, were still the same, carried home conviction to the inquisitive and tender-hearted couple; and, in a moment, the two sons were locked in the embrace of the two parents.

The abbot watched the tears and kisses, which, most likely, he envied, exclaiming, “Give glory to God!” and raising eyes and hands to heaven, the whole company were overwhelmed in love and praise.

Explanations followed. The sons related their adventures. They had not been long at sea before they encountered a terrible gale which wrecked their vessel on a reef of rocks. Death stared them in the face; and, clinging to each other, they awaited

the last moment, when a wave dashed the bark in pieces, and they were swept away by the waters, whither they knew not. Separated, and far apart, they clung to broken pieces of the ship, and were at last carried to shore, each supposing the other had sunk into a watery grave. John reached land near a monastery, where he was taken in and cared for until he recovered from the shock of the disaster. Then, rejoicing in the calm retreat to which he was welcomed, he resolved to stay, and to devote himself to the life led by the brethren. Arcadius, as we have seen, after his escape proceeded to Jerusalem, and there found a home under the worthy abbot's roof, who became a bond to unite together once more the scattered family. The father and mother, like the sons, abandoned the world, and spent the remaining days in retirement and devotion.

In looking back upon this chequered story, we may acknowledge it is quite possible that the whole was piously composed as an illustration of the mysteries of Divine providence, and how the Heavenly Father leadeth His blind children by a way they know not; but it seems much more probable that the main incidents of the narrative actually occurred, as they are by no means of an incredible character.

CHAPTER VI.

A MYSTERIOUS WANDERER.

“This story of St. Alexis seems to be an exhortation expressed after the manner of a parable for the purpose of inciting the world’s scorn and inspiring a love of humiliation rather than the narrative of any actual occurrence. It appears that the author has produced from nothingness the basis on which he works; though the Church has been far from believing that Alexis was but an imaginary saint, since she decreed for him public veneration both in the East and West.”—*Translated from BAILLET, “Vies des Saints,” Juillet xiv.*

CHAPTER VI.

A MYSTERIOUS WANDERER.

THERE lived in Rome, at the beginning of the fifth century, a nobleman named Eufemian, chief officer of the Imperial court. So runs the legend in "Gesta Romanorum." Youths dressed in silken vests with golden girdles daily waited on his lordship. He kept three tables for widows and orphans, who were always welcome. He was regular in his habits, and his wife was as religious and charitable as himself; but he had no children, which was a great sorrow. At length God gave them a son, whom they called Alexis or Alexius.

When he came of age he married a lady of royal birth; but, strange to say, immediately after the nuptials, he left her, expressing his desire to lead a celibate life, which he wished her to do also. When he left home, he gave his servant a gold ring and the clasp of his school belt, saying, "Take care of these, and as long as it will please God, keep them in remembrance of me."

The same night he went on board a ship bound

for Laodicea, whence he proceeded to Edessa, in Syria. Settling down in that city, he gave away his money to the poor, and went about in a ragged garment. So clothed, he joined a party of beggars in the porch of a temple dedicated to the Virgin. There he asked alms; and of what he received he kept only a small portion for his own support.

Eufemian was disconsolate when he found his son had left the country, and he did whatever he could to find out whither the wanderer had gone. It was all of no use. Messengers reached Edessa, Alexis actually saw them, but he being much altered was not recognised by them. They passed him in the streets, little thinking he was their master's son. Being entrusted with plenty of money for the purpose, they relieved the poor abundantly; and when this came to the knowledge of Alexis, he said, "I thank Thee, O my God, that Thou hast thought good to dispense Thy bounty through the hands of those who are my father's and my own servants."

When they could not discover Alexis, they returned and told their master; and his wife shut herself up in her chamber, and made sackcloth her covering, vowing to live alone as a nun until the lost boy was found. The husband being thus forsaken, went and lived with his father-in-law.

For seventeen years Alexis remained at Edessa, clothed in rags and begging his bread at the church

door. One day the Virgin Mary spoke to the doorkeeper of the church, "Cause that man of God to enter the sanctuary, for upon him the Spirit of God rests; and he is worthy of the Kingdom of Heaven. His prayer comes up as incense before the throne of grace." The doorkeeper did not know, but he guessed, whom she meant. "Is it the man who sits begging at the gate of the porch?" he asked the Virgin. "Yes," she replied. So the beggar was brought into the inner sanctuary. This circumstance, and the special favour shown him by attendants excited attention; and the worshippers in the church wondered who he was. They paid him such respect, they showed such admiration, that it looked almost as if they adored him. But he was too humble to be led away into paths of pride, and continued to manifest the utmost lowliness.

At length he resolved to leave Edessa, and, entering a ship bound for Tarsus in Cilicia, he sailed thither, delighting in the expectation of walking there in the footsteps of the Apostle Paul. But the winds were contrary, and the vessel was carried to the coast of Italy.

When he landed on his native shores, he made up his mind he would return to Rome, and live there on charity, without his father's knowing it.

Soon the wanderer recognised his father walking in the street, attended by a train of servants. He went

up to him and asked him to allow a stranger to be conveyed to his house and be fed like Lazarus with crumbs from the master's table. The father was touched by this appeal, little thinking from whom it came, and directed that the outcast should be taken in. He gave the unknown a room in his house, and supplied him with food from his own table.

Alexis went on mortifying himself as a penitent, fasting and praying, and inflicting upon his body all kinds of pain. The servants despised him for doing so, and treated him with much indignity. But he endured their treatment with the utmost patience, and when reviled, reviled not again.

He spent years under the parental roof, until the time came that he should die. Then he determined to make himself known ; and obtaining paper, pen, and ink, he wrote a narrative of what he had passed through since he first left Rome. He kept the narrative to himself for the present, but one Sunday a mysterious voice, like thunder, was heard saying, "Come unto me, all ye that labour, and I will give you rest." People were frightened. Then the same voice said again, "Seek out a man of God to offer prayer for the iniquity of Rome."

Where was such a man of God to be found as could effectually intercede for the guilty population ? The voice afterwards said, "Search in the house of Eufemian." So Arcadius and Honorius, the Emperors

then reigning, and the Bishop (or Pontiff), whose name was Innocent, went in search of the wonderful man; and the servant who waited on Alexis ran to meet his master, asking whether the mysterious stranger indoors was not the very person they were looking for? The father hastened to his son's chamber, and found him dead, but with a light on his face like the glory of an angel, and the narrative he had written held in his hand. At first they could not get it away, but when the bishop came, the fingers of the corpse were loosened, and the scroll obtained.

The contents astonished everybody. The father fainted; and when he came to himself, rent his garments, plucked the white hair from his head, and tore away his beard. Falling on the dead body, he shrieked, "Alas! my son, my son, why hast thou laid up for me such anguish? why hast thou been so long enduring a bitterness worse than death? Wretched man that I am; he who should have been the stay of my old age, lies speechless upon this miserable bed. Where is consolation to be found?" Amidst these exclamations his wife rushed forward, with torn garments, dishevelled hair, and wild staring eyes lifted despondingly to heaven. She approached the body, and uttered frantic words like those of her husband, dwelling upon the treatment Alexis had received at the hands of the slaves in the

palace. "They scoffed at thee, they cruelly treated thee, thou wert patient, too, too patient."

The wife of Alexis, whom he had strangely left on the nuptial night, came to the room, with a crowd of people. Springing forward, she bewailed her widowhood, "When shall mine eye see gladness? The glass of my joy is broken, my hope is extinguished." The body was placed on a sumptuous bier, and carried through the streets; multitudes crowded to see the funeral of a man whom Heaven had pointed out as a fitting intercessor for a guilty city. Miracles were wrought. The blind received sight, the sick were healed, and demons were driven out of the possessed. The corpse was brought to the Church of Boniface the Martyr. There for seven days people tarried praising God. An odour of sanctity came forth, and the building was filled with fragrance.

I have given the legend perhaps at greater length than it deserves, as it appears in the "*Gesta Romanorum*," containing, as already noticed, a number of stories gathered up in the Middle Ages for religious edification. They were often employed in sermons from the pulpit, and were circulated in entertaining talk. Such things were popular in the fourteenth and fifteenth century.

But the legend is told in other ways, with some romantic and picturesque incidents. For example, we read that the father of Alexis lived on the Cœlian

Hill, and that the boy under silk and gold clothing wore a hair shirt; that his bride was virtuous, and beautiful to behold; that he was unwilling to marry, but did not dare disobey his father; that the wedding was grand; that the people at Edessa, when they saw Alexis, used to cry out, "A saint;" that the father exclaimed, when the beggar came to him, "Alas! for my son, perhaps he is now a wanderer and poor, even as this man;" that he had no other lodging than a hole under the marble steps leading up to his father's door; and that the servants treated him as an idiot, tearing his hair, and throwing dirt in his face.

The story of Alexis is not found anywhere earlier than in a poem of the ninth century, after which the story grew more and more wonderful. Probably the pictures in St. Clemente at Rome, representing some of the incidents above described, are of the same date or a little later. But it is said, a church was dedicated to him in A.D. 401, by Innocent I., on the site of the house where his father had lived, and where previously had stood a church dedicated to St. Boniface, an early Roman saint. The Church and convent of Alexis or Alessio, which I recently visited, stands on the Cœlian Hill, near to that of St. Sabina. The well of Eufemian's house is shown, also the marble steps of the doorway, under which his son died.

The church, reconsecrated by Innocent in A.D. 401, —long before we have any trace of the legend—may have fixed a date for it ; but of the incidents related there is no evidence whatever ; indeed, some are utterly incredible. That a person named Alexis may have lived in Rome about the time mentioned is not improbable ; but that the details of the legend are fictions no critic will dispute. A great deal of the colouring given to the story is plainly of mediæval origin.

One may infer that the substance of what I have related was, as Baillet thinks, a parable for moral and spiritual uses, rather than a narrative to be taken historically, for the monk who relates the story makes the following application of the whole :—

“My beloved, Eufemian is any man of the world, who hath a darling son for whose advantage he labours day and night. He obtains a wife for him, that is, the vanity of the world, which he delights in as in a bride ; nay, the world’s vanities are often more to a man than the most virtuous wife ; for life is sacrificed to the one, but, alas ! how seldom to the other. The mother is the world itself, which greatly values her worldly-minded children. But the good son, like the blessed Alexis, is more studious to please God than his parents, remembering that it is said, ‘He who forsakes land, or houses, or father or mother, or wife for My sake, shall receive

a hundredfold, and possess eternal life.' The ship is our Holy Church, by which we ought to enter if we would obtain everlasting happiness. We must likewise lay aside gorgeous raiment—that is, the pomps of the world,—and associate with the poor—that is, the poor in spirit. The warden or doorkeeper, who conducted him into the church, is a prudent confessor, whose duty it is to instruct the sinner and lead him to a knowledge of the sacred Scriptures, by which the soul may pass unharmed to immortality. But sometimes tempests arise, and hurry a man to his own country, as it happened to Alexis. The temptations of the evil one are symbolized by these tempests, which turn the voyager from his settled course, and prevent a life of goodness. If, therefore, you feel that you are subject to certain temptations, follow the example of the holy Alexis. Assume the dress of a pilgrim—that is, take the qualities necessary for the pilgrimage of this life,—and disguise yourself from your carnal and worldly father, and become a man of God. But if it fall out, that when such an one aspires to a life of penitence, his parents lament, and decry their child's contempt of the world, and his voluntary choice of poverty for the love of God—still, it is safer to displease them than Heaven. Obtain, therefore, a fair piece of paper, which is a good conscience, on which inscribe your life; and then the High Priest with the

Emperors—that is Christ with a multitude of angels, —will convey your soul to the Church of St. Boniface, that is, to eternal life where all sanctity abounds.”

I have given at the commencement of this chapter an extract from the “*Vies des Saints*,” tom. v., 237. Butler speaks of Pinius, the Bollandist, as confuting “at large the groundless and inconsistent surmises of Baillet;” but I do not find anything in the “*Acta Sanctorum*” (4 July, p. 239), to justify such a statement.

I think that an allegorical explanation is the best key to many legends, wholly or in part. They illustrate the beliefs of the age in which they were written. The eulogized virtues of poverty, the worship of the Virgin, and the belief that she spoke from heaven, the working of miracles, and the efficacy of pilgrimages,—all point to a state of things of which we have no historical proof so early as the period to which the legend relates. Certainly, the idea of saintship embalmed on this story is far removed from the teaching of the New Testament.

Notwithstanding, the legend remained in repute down to the fifteenth century; and it is related that St. Frances of Rome saw Alexis in a pilgrim’s robe, standing before her, and heard him say, “I am sent from God to inquire of thee if thou chooseth to be healed?” He drew his mantle over her, and she recovered immediately.

Parnell's Hermit is a versification of another parabolic story in the "Gesta Romanorum," and in harmony with the religious meaning of such legends. I may also add, that in the portico of the monastic Church of S. Sabina, close to that of S. Alexis, on the Aventine at Rome, I saw lately the picture of a Dominican brother named Gusmanus, who lost his way one dark night, when a Divine radiance fell around him as the light of day, and an angel appeared teaching him to teach others, how the just shall always walk in paths of safety. I think it probable that the legend was invented to enforce the lesson.

CHAPTER VII.

ST. GEORGE AND THE DRAGON.

“ Of Hector’s deeds did Homer sing,
And of the sack of stately Troy,
What griefs fair Helena did bring,
Which was Sir Paris’ only joy :
And by my pen I will recite
St. George’s deeds, an English knight.”

BISHOP PERCY’S *Reliques*.

CHAPTER VII.

ST. GEORGE AND THE DRAGON.

A WATCHWORD has wondrous power when it accords with public opinion; but though there are still syllables which can move multitudes as when leaves are shaken by the wind, perhaps there is nothing now which produces the same excitement as, five or six centuries ago, followed the battlecry, "On them, St. George! St. George, forward!" So great was its charm that the Irish were forbidden to use any other than that, "whereby the soldier is much comforted, and the enemy dismayed, through calling to mind the ancient valour of England, which, with that name, has so often been victorious." Legends and ballads kept its potency alive. In the king's court as well as the bowman's cottage its strange charm was felt; and when the knight elect of the Garter was invested with the insignia of the Order, according to royal statute, this admonition was read, "Wear this ribband about thy neck, adorned with the image of the blessed martyr and soldier of Christ, St. George, by whose

imitation provoked, thou mayest so overpass both prosperous and adverse encounters, that, having stoutly vanquished thy enemies, both of body and soul, thou mayest not only receive the praise of this transient combat, but be crowned with the palm of eternal victory." Enthusiasm of this sort took possession of municipal corporations and companies; for in the city of Norwich there was instituted, during the reign of Edward II., a guild "wel wyllled and styrred to devocion of the glorious martyr." There were similar guilds in other places, Leicester and Coventry, for instance; and St. George's Day, April 23rd, was a great holiday in many towns.

Who was this martyr and soldier who so inspired our fathers? We must turn to legends popular at that time to find this out. The influence came not from the actual facts of his history, but from fictions entwined round his name.

There are two main varieties in the fascinating story of St. George, one Greek, the other Latin. With the latter only we have to do, and I take it as it appears in the "Golden Legend." He is placed in the third or fourth century.

He was born of Christian parents in Cappadocia, under the Emperor Diocletian. He went on his travels, and arrived at a city of Lybia, named Silene. Near to it was a stagnant pool, the dwelling-place of a dragon, so fierce and venomous, that it

terrified the whole country, devouring flocks and herds, and threatening the lives of the inhabitants. To satisfy its appetite, they gave it at first two sheep a day; and when they had exhausted their stock by this supply, they could only give one of those animals; in the room of another, they had to sacrifice a human being. After this, lest all the men of the place should be devoured, they drew lots for children under thirteen years of age; so families were being gradually wasted, and houses were filled with "mourning, lamentation, and woe.'

The king of the city had a fair daughter, and her name was Cleodolinda. At length the fatal lot fell on her, which plunged her parents into distraction and despair. Gold was nothing to them compared with their beloved child; and, therefore, the father offered the richest bribes to save her life. But the people would not hear of it; the king had made this terrible law, they said, and he must abide by the consequences of it. The king shed tears, but his subjects were obstinate. The damsel must submit and die, as others had done. He asked for eight days' respite, that she might bewail her terrible fate, and prepare for her inevitable doom. The eighth day came; and then she was brought out, a sacrifice dressed in royal robes, as if going to her bridal. Having kissed her, the king yielded her up, when she fell at his feet and

declared her willingness to suffer for the sake of his afflicted people. Amidst tears and lamentations, she walked forth towards the pool where the dragon dwelt, her path being strewn with the remains of former victims.

At this time, it happened that St. George, being on his travels, came near the city. As he rode by he saw the unhappy maiden, and witnessed the consternation of a great multitude that watched her at a distance. He stopped, and asked what was the matter, why she wept? When he heard her piteous story, his heart was touched, and he exclaimed, "Fear not, for I will deliver thee." "Go your way, fair young man, that thou perish not too," was her immediate answer. "Fly," she continued, "fly, I beseech thee." The dragon now came in sight, and rushed towards them. "God forbid that I should fly," added St. George; "I will lift up my hand against this loathsome monster, and deliver thee through the power of Jesus Christ." The contest went on between fortitude on her side and heroism on his. He would help; she refused help given at the hazard of his life. Crawling, flying, on and on moved the horrid creature. She trembled violently, shrieking out, "Fly, I beseech thee, brave knight, and leave me here to die." He drew his sword, made the sign of the cross, called on Christ to help him, and dashed forward on his

war steed to meet the foe. The end of the fight is thus celebrated in a popular ballad:—

“ When many hardy strokes he'd dealt,
And could not pierce his hide,
He ran his sword up to the hilt
In at the dragon's side ;
By which he did his life destroy,
Which cheered the drooping king,
This caus'd an universal joy,
Sweet peals of bells did ring.”

But before this final destruction, the victory being won, St. George called to the virgin to bind the beast whom he had pinned to the ground with his lance. She, at this command, tied her girdle round the dragon's neck ; and, to use the words of the legend, “the dragon followed, as it had been a meeke beast and debonayre.” The brute was tamed by the damsel's touch. When the people saw it coming they were afraid, and fled to the mountains ; but St. George told them not to be troubled. “Fear nothing,” he went on to say, “only believe in the God through whose might I have conquered, and be baptized, and I will destroy him before your eyes.” Then St. George slew the dragon, as already mentioned, and cut off his head. The king was baptized, with more than 15,000 men, besides women and children, and the people dragged away the remains of the reptile in four carts, and built a church in commemoration of the deliverance.

When Diocletian issued his edict against the Christians,* and affixed it to temple gates, and other public buildings, St. George tore it down, and trampled it under foot; for which offence he was seized, brought before the pro-consul, and condemned to suffer torture for eight days. He was tied to a cross, torn with nails, scorched with torches, and further tormented by salt rubbed into his wounds. Poison was given him. Then he commended himself to God, making the sign of the cross, and drank the poison without it doing him any injury.

“An expressive allegory,” remarks Mrs. Jameson, “signifying the power of Christian truth to expel and defeat evil.” The miracle overcame and convinced a magician, who had mingled the poison cup, and he fell at St. George’s feet a converted Christian. Upon this the enchanter was beheaded; and the hero was bound to a wheel of sharp blades, but the wheel was mysteriously broken, as in St. Catherine’s case. Then he was thrown into a cauldron of boiling lead, and came out unharmed. Other wonders followed, and at last he was beheaded, a kind of execution which in all such legends seems to have proved effectual when other attempts had failed.

Eusebius, in his “Ecclesiastical History” (viii. 5) mentions a man who tore down Diocletian’s edict,

* The legend places St. George’s heroism at that period.

and so provoked imperial wrath. This man, the historian tells us, after enduring what was likely to follow an act so daring, preserved his mind calm and serene until the moment when his spirit fled. He was a martyr. His name is not given, but he has been identified with St. George, but without sufficient authority. It is curious to see how the whole story is made up.

Gibbon, in his characteristic way, disposes of it as founded upon the life of an Arian bishop of Alexandria, whose name was George, and who is called the Cappadocian. He is represented as oppressing the Alexandrians, "and betraying the vices of his base and servile extraction." He was dragged to prison, and expired under the cruel insults of the mob. "The rival of Athanasius," says the historian of the "Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire," "was dear and sacred to the Arians; and the seeming conversion of those sectaries introduced his worship into the bosom of the Catholic Church. The odious stranger, disguising every circumstance of time and place, assumed the mask of a martyr, a saint, and a Christian hero; and the infamous George of Cappadocia has been transformed into the renowned St. George of England, the patron of arms, of chivalry, and of the garter." I am quite at a loss to discover what grounds, worthy of acceptance, there are for this imperious decision. The only

thing in the way of evidence we meet with on Gibbons' page is a brief note, saying, "Through a cloud of fiction we may yet distinguish the combat which St. George of Cappadocia sustained in the presence of Queen *Alexandria* against the magician *Athanasius*." I wonder how any one can be satisfied with a theory based on no better foundation.

Still, it remains that fiction abounds in the Georgian legends, and it is worth while to look at sources whence, probably, they have been taken.

That the legend of St. George resembles the classic fable of Perseus and Andromeda is, I think, made clear by Mr. Ruskin, in his second supplement to "St. Mark's Rest," entitled "The Place of Dragons."

Andromeda was daughter of an Ethiopian king, whose land was infested by a monster; and an oracle promised that the people should be delivered if Andromeda were given over to its cruel power. Yielding to the wishes of his subjects, the king chained Andromeda to a rock as a victim for the fatal pest. There she was found and saved by Perseus, who slew the creature, and married Andromeda. "The earliest and central shrine of St. George," says Mr. Ruskin, "rose at Lydda, by the stream which Pausanias, in the second century, saw running still red as blood, because Perseus had bathed there after his conquest of the sea monster."

“In the place chosen by fate for this the most famous and finished example of harmony between the old faith and the new, there is a strange double piece of real mythology. Many are offended when told that with the best teaching of the Christian Church Gentile symbolism and story have often mingled. Some till lament vanished dreams of the world’s morning, echo the voice of weeping heard, and loud lament, by woodland altar and sacred thicket.”

But “there is a large body of evidence proving the origin of the story of St. George and the Dragon from that of Perseus. The names of certain of the persons concerned in both coincide. Secondary, or later variations in the place of the fight appear alike in both legends. For example, the scene of both is sometimes laid in Phœnicia, north of Joppa. But concerning this, we may note that a mythologist of the age of Augustus, recounting this legend, is careful to explain that the name of Joppa had since been changed to Phœnice.”

“The stories of the fight given by Greeks and Christians are almost identical. There is scarcely an incident in it told by one set of writers, but occurs in the account given by some member or members of the other set, even to the crowd of distant spectators, and to the votive altars raised above the body of the monster, with the stream of

healing that flowed beside them. And while both accounts say how the saved nations rendered thanks to the Father in heaven, we are told that the heathen placed beside His altar, altars to the Maiden Wisdom and to Hermes, while the Christians placed altars dedicated to the Maiden Mother and to George. Even Medusa's head did not come amiss to the mediæval artist, but, set in the saint's hand, became his own, fit indication of the death by which he should afterwards glorify God."

Mr. Ruskin, in connection with these researches, describes some pictures by Carpaccio, in a little chapel on the Venetian canal, called *Rio della piet *, not far from the Campo di S. Antonin. He describes them as having the effect of "a soft evening sunshine on the walls, or glow from embers on some peaceful hearth, cast up into the room, where one sits waiting for dear friends in twilight." When in Venice a few months ago, I went in search of these works of art, and found them. First, there is St. George and the Dragon. "No dragon pictured among mortal worms; no knight pictured in immortal chivalry so perfect." Secondly, "comes the dragon, led into the market place of the sultan's capital, submissive, the piece of St. George's spear, which has gone through the back of his head, being used as a bridle."

The people grouped together are seen looking

earnestly on the strange spectacle. And, thirdly, there is the baptism of the sultan, or king, by St. George, whilst trumpeters are represented as joyfully celebrating this royal conversion. The princess is seen with golden locks falling over her shoulders.

No doubt there are strong points of resemblance between the classical and the Church legends ; but, though this is the case, it only shows the *possibility* of the latter being influenced by the former. Yet it should be remarked that in the Greek legends of St. George, the fight with the dragon faintly appears, whilst it is vivid enough in Latin fable and Latin art.

I cannot help thinking that other influences had to do with shaping the popular story in the West. In the Bible we read about dragons, not only as beasts, but as symbols of the devil. It is a glorious promise in the Psalms, "The dragon shalt thou trample under foot" ; and it is a magnificent vision in the Apocalypse, "I saw an angel come down from Heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit, and a great chain in his hand, and he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the devil and Satan, and bound him a thousand years." The legend of the Archangel Michael touches that of St. George in one main point ; in the New Testament we find "Michael, the Archangel, contending with the devil" ; and again Michael "and his angels fought against the dragon." Further, in the

Apocrypha, Bel and the Dragon conspicuously figure ; and all these emblems of evil and the spirit of evil, all these pictures of a conflict between good and evil, were familiar to church people of the Middle Ages. I do not say that St. George was a mere myth ; I believe that he was an historical personage ; but around him external associations have been woven of the kind I have indicated. Moreover, the idea of a "dragon," as an image of the evil one, destroyed by the labours of God's servants, is common ; as in the legend of Tarascon already noticed, and the legend of St. Beat hereafter introduced. Besides, we meet with the legend of St. Hilarion, who said to a dragon of monstrous size, "Follow me." Tamed by the words, it followed with as much docility as any dog could show. Led to a pyre ready to be set in blaze, it was bidden to ascend, and so it did, and was forthwith consumed. Further, as to the pathetic incident of the king's daughter asking for eight days' respite, to bewail her fate, how it reminds us of Jephthah's daughter, who said, "Let me alone for two months, that I may go up and down on the mountains and bewail my virginity."

In reviewing the mass of literature relative to St. George, and the effect it had for many years, especially in England, I am more and more convinced of the influence which it exerted on our forefathers ; and,

therefore, as a chapter in history it is deserving of study. Not only did the Order of the Garter, and the establishment of companies and guilds in honour of the saint, attest his popularity, but the very air was filled with thoughts of him, as appears from mysteries and pageants bearing his name, enacted at Bassingbourn, Stratford-on-Avon, and elsewhere.

Something of a parallel to St. George and the Dragon may be recognized in Bunyan's "*Pilgrim's Progress*," where he describes Apollyon and the pilgrim soldier. "Now the monster was hideous to behold; he was clothed with scales like a fish (and they are his pride), he had wings like a dragon, feet like a bear, and out of his body came fire and smoke, and his mouth was as the mouth of a lion. When he came up to Christian, he beheld him with a disdainful countenance." Then follows the battle. "In this combat, no man can imagine, unless he had seen and heard, as I did, what yelling and hideous roaring Apollyon made all the time of the fight—he spake like a dragon; and on the other side, what sighs and groans burst from Christian's heart! I never saw him all the while give so much as one pleasant look, till he perceived he had wounded Apollyon with his two-edged sword; then indeed he did smile, and look upward: but it was the dreadfullest sight that I ever saw." Afterwards comes the quaint song,—

“ But blessed Michael helped me, and I,
By dint of sword, did quickly make him fly ;
Therefore to him let me give lasting praise,
And thank and bless his holy name always.”

Bunyan was thinking of St. Michael, as symbolizing the Divine Helper, in a good man's conflict with temptation ; and is it unlikely that he might think, too, of St. George and the Dragon as a companion picture ? for Bunyan, who used similitudes with an eye for the picturesque, could not but be interested in the popular story.

CHAPTER VIII.

ST. BENEDICT.

“ Was this pleasant, was this needful, O ye monks of olden day ?

In what records found you order that you took this dark, hard
way ?

Will you answer from the death-land ?—let me hear what you
can say.

Faintly came a whisper, ‘ We have entered into rest ;

For according to our power and our light we did our best.

Do you better in your daytime, and you, too, shall soon be blest.

But remember in all service you must quell your heart, and hold

Law as higher than your liking, duty dearer far than gold.

Let what will decay and vanish, this requirement ne'er grows old.’ ”

ALFRED NORRIS.

CHAPTER VIII.

ST. BENEDICT.

THE road from Tivoli to Subiaco winds among the Sabine hills, where rock, wood, and water are charmingly combined, and the traveller finds himself surrounded by Swiss-like grandeur toned down by soft touches of Italian beauty. Upon reaching the last-named town, and driving to the opposite end, he comes to a magnificent gorge on the left hand, where what he has rejoiced in all the way reaches the highest point of interest. Crossing a romantic bridge, he sees a spacious convent upon the hillside. It is dedicated to St. Scholastica, and there, towards the close of the fifteenth century, the first Italian printing-press was established. Ilexes, olives, and vineyards abound thereabouts; and in spring the pathways run over a carpet of anemones, hyacinths, and other flowers. Proceeding up the hill, as you rise higher the mountain landscape opens to the right, and the eye looks down on a gorge mantled with luxuriant vegetation, amidst which the river Anio dashes down in a series of cataracts.

Through a grove you enter the monastery of St. Benedict. It is a cluster of chapels and conventual cells, where you ascend rocky stairways, and then creep down steep descents. You proceed through a bewildering maze, and every now and then come upon a fresco. The place is rich in legends of sainted visitors; but chief of all are the legends of St. Benedict, who here spent the first portion of his monastic life.

He was born in A.D. 480, and belonged to a noble family; but when he was fourteen years old he determined to renounce the world, then in terrible confusion both from the immorality of Roman people and the violent inroads of Gothic tribes. He retired to a place called Mentorella, where his nurse, Cyrilla, followed him. She borrowed a stone sieve used for making bread, which by accident was broken to pieces. Her young master prayed over it, and restored the whole to its original form, and here begins a multitude of miracles which besprinkle his life all the way through. He afterwards removed to the neighbourhood of Subiaco, far away from the haunts of men.

In a dark cave—nucleus of the present cells and chapels—Benedict fixed his abode for three years, and met with a monk called Romanus, who provided him with a monastic habit made of skin, and gave him a hair shirt, the uniform of saintship. This

neighbour fed him day by day with the leavings of his own scanty store, and these were dropped down to him at the end of a cord, to which was attached a little bell. The tinkling of it summoned Benedict to his meals. The shepherds of the neighbourhood took him for some wild animal, his hair, his nails, his garment of rough skin giving him the wildest appearance.

His fame spread far and wide, and people came from all quarters seeking his aid in accidents and other troubles. Many devoted themselves to a life like his, and their number so increased, that, at length, not less than twelve monasteries, each containing twelve monks, peopled the fastnesses of the gorge.

St. Maurus, who gave his name to a learned brotherhood of after times, was one of Benedict's earliest disciples. He came, when a boy twelve years old, accompanied by his brother Placidus, who was only five, to receive education at Subiaco. They were servants no less than pupils. One day Placidus was sent to draw water, when the weight of his pitcher overbalanced him, and he tumbled into a lake. St. Benedict ordered Maurus to go and save the little fellow from drowning, when Maurus felt so much confidence in the order of his master, that he walked on the surface of the water, as if it had been a marble floor, and plucked the boy from the eddies

of a whirlpool. Bossuet is so fascinated with this miracle in a discourse he delivered to the brethren of St. Maur, that he asks the question, "Whether so great a miracle is to be attributed to the virtue of the obedience, or to the power of the commandment?" He divides the honour between the two. "The obedience had grace to accomplish the command, the command had grace to give efficacy to the obedience."

The name *dell'Acqua*, distinguishing one of the monasteries, originated in the bursting out of a fountain from the rock to supply the thirsty monks in answer to St. Benedict's prayers. One cave—the Holy of Holies—in which he dwelt by himself, "always busied in the presence of his Creator in bewailing the spiritual miseries of his soul and past sins, in watching over the emotions of his heart, and in the constant contemplation of Divine things," was a scene of special temptation; for there the devil used to hover over him as a blackbird, suggesting sinful thoughts—an imaginative way of setting forth too common a fact. He resisted the evil one, and sought to subdue the desires of the flesh by extraordinary self-mortification. For he would go and roll himself over a bed of thorns, which grew on a rocky ledge close by his cell. The ledge remains, and is now covered with roses. These, however, were not produced by miracle, but in con-

sequence of St. Francis having, on a visit there, planted roses instead of thorns; the roses have survived the thorns, and taken their place for ever.

Benedict had enemies, and some of them made attempts on his life. His discipline was too severe to please some neighbouring monks, and one of them sent him a poisoned loaf, which he immediately detected, and commanded a raven to carry it away where nobody could find it. Much more marvellous is the story about a poisoned cup, placed in his hand by monks who had submitted to his rule, and then rebelled. He signed the cross over the cup, and in a moment it broke, as if it had been struck with a stone.

Gothic barbarians came to Subiaco, and were drawn within Benedict's influence. They threw aside weapons of war for instruments of labour. Instead of a sword they took an axe, and went into the woods to clear away sites for convents, and to turn the wilderness into a fruitful field. St. Gregory relates a legend to the effect that a Gothic labourer, more industrious than skilful, dropped his tool into the lake, which was miraculously restored to him by the same disciple as had saved his young brother from a watery grave. Perhaps the two accounts spring from one source.

We must now repair to another part of Italy. Near the railway line from Rome to Naples stands

the stately monastery of Monte Cassino. It was founded by St. Benedict. If the wildness and difficult access of the Subiaco gorge attracted him as a first retreat, it would seem that the neighbourhood of a pagan population drew him to Monte Cassino with the hope of converting the inhabitants. It is said that St. Benedict chose the hills and St. Bernard the valleys ; and it is thought that scenery mainly determined monastic sites. I question this. It might do so in some cases, but certainly not in that of Subiaco and Monte Cassino. The seclusion, not the beauty of the former, the field of usefulness, not the landscape around the latter, was the ground of the great abbot's choice. And it should be remembered that much of the loveliness, in many instances all of it, which we so much admire as we ramble over the ruins of old abbeys, was produced almost entirely by monastic labour.

At Monte Cassino there is an oratory named after St. Placidus, Benedict's favourite disciple, and another named after St. Scholastica, his beloved sister ; and a cross on a platform marks the spot where occurred the last fond interview between the twin souls. Troubles and temptations followed Benedict to his second and last foundation.

It was at Monte Cassino that the Benedictine rule was drawn up—a rule which has governed all the branches of the great Order from that day

to this. It is based on two principles, obedience and industry. One governing will is to regulate all subordinate wills. Self-sacrifice is the first demand, also the last. The monk, from the day he adopts the cowl, to the day when he yields up his last breath, is, in all respects, to be a servant, and to do what he is bid. At the same time, the idea of "lazy monks" is quite contrary to facts. Meditation, or what is termed "the internal action of the soul," comes under strict regulation, and with it is united the employment of time throughout the day, and the night also. Seven periods in the twenty-four hours were marked for offering praises to God, and seven hours were further to be occupied in active labour for men. The Benedictine, if not working in the fields, had to write in the scriptorium.

Above all, Benedict required his followers to be clothed with humility. They were to walk in the Divine presence with compunction of heart and holy fear; they were to be patient under sufferings and injuries, to rejoice under humiliation, to be pleased with mean employments, and to love simple society, to esteem others better than themselves, to be modest in conversation. This formed a beautiful ideal, which it would have been well to follow out in practice more completely than it appears, from history, multitudes of the Benedictines ever

did. "Our life in this world," the founder said, "is like the ladder which Jacob saw in his dream: in order that it may reach heaven, it must be planted by the Saviour in a humbled heart; we can only mount by the different steps of humility and discipline." The whole rule Benedict maintained is a small beginning, "a modest invitation" into the way of Christian perfection.

St. Gregory tells how Benedict devoted himself at Monte Cassino to the visitation of the sick, how he paid the debts of the poor, and how he distributed the wealth of the convent amongst needy dependents. When a famine prevailed in Campania, and there remained but five loaves in the brethren's larder, and they were in despair of next day's food, he exclaimed, "You have not enough to-day, to-morrow you shall have too much." Lo and behold, on the following morning, two hundred bushels of flour were brought unexpectedly to the monastery gates.

Montalembert ascribes to Benedict the power of second sight, of thought-reading, of discerning spirits, of seeing apparitions, and of discovering what people were doing at a distance. The saint is said to have easily detected any attempt at deception. Totila, the Ostrogoth, resolved to test him. So he dressed up one of his officers in royal robes, and sent him to the abbey with a number of attendants. Benedict was reading by the gate,

and when he saw the procession approaching, he lifted his eyes from the book, and said to the pretender, "My son, take off those robes, for they are not thine." The man returned to his master in amazement, and then conducted him to the abbot, who rebuked Totila for his depredations; and with the assurance of a prophet Benedict said, "Thou shalt enter Rome, thou shalt pass over the sea, thou shalt reign for nine years, but in the tenth thou shalt die, and stand before the judgment seat of God." And so it proved. Again a Goth, called Galla, tortured people to give up their property. One of his victims said he had entrusted all he possessed to Benedict, servant of God. Galla commanded the peasant to be bound, and to go on before, showing the road to the convent, as he came behind on horseback. When they reached the top of the mountain, and stood under the shadow of the entrance to the abbot's hall, they saw Benedict sitting there. "Behold the father of whom I told thee," cried the man in bonds. "Rise up, and restore quickly what thou hast received from this peasant," added the man on horseback, as he looked at Benedict. Benedict looked at both with a fiery glance, "which scorched and snapped the captive's bonds,"—so runs the legend,—and, at the same moment, cowed the haughty chieftain and made him tremble. Falling at the abbot's feet, Galla

craved his prayers. And the interview ended very differently from the way in which it began.

It is remarkable how in this and other legends little is attributed to the hero's personal qualities and powers, though they were obvious factors in the recorded results. The Divine agency so filled the sphere of vision, that in it was lost all estimate of natural causes. We can almost forgive the absence of critical judgment when we think of the spiritual instinct which led men to see God in all things, and all things in God. While Benedict ruled at Monte Cassino, Scholastica lived at the foot of the hill, in sympathy with her brother; but unseen, except once a year, when she left her cloister, and met him on the mountain side, near the monastery door. The last of these interviews is particularly recorded. They spent the day in Scholastica's cell, and in united worship. At eventide they partook of a meal such as the Order allowed. "I pray," said the sister, "do not leave me to-night. Tarry, that we may talk of heavenly joys until the morning." She asked what was contrary to the rules of the Order. Benedict refused; Scholastica bowed her head and burst into tears. Just then the weather was calm, presently came a storm. Lightning flashed. Thunder rolled. Rain poured down. The night was so tempestuous that the monk was imprisoned. "May God pardon thee,

my sister, what hast thou done?" He interpreted the storm in one way, she in another. "I prayed thee," rejoined Scholastica, "and thou wouldst not listen. I prayed God, and He heard." The abbot was compelled to remain with his sister: and in the morning they parted to meet no more in this life. Gregory writes, after recording the story, "God granted the sister's desire rather than the brother's, because she loved most, and love has the greater power with God."

Three days after, the legend goes on to say, Benedict, at the window of his cell, saw his sister's spirit like a dove mount up to heaven. He died about A.D. 542.

Marvel rises above marvel in the story of this extraordinary man. Good people sometimes hear of their own humble sayings and doings in a tone of such exaggeration and invention that they feel it difficult to recognize their own selves. I daresay if Benedict could have read some of the lives written of him, he would scarcely have known who was meant.

Dante introduces Benedict in the *Divine Comedy* ("Paradise," xxii.) saying,—

"That mountain on whose slope Cassino stands
Was frequented of old upon its summit
By a deluded folk and ill disposed ;
And I am he who first upthither bore

The name of Him who brought upon the earth
The truth that so much sublimateth us.
And such abundant grace upon me shone
That all the neighbouring towns I drew away
From impious worship that seduced the world.
These other fires, each one of them, were men
Contemplative, enkindled by that heat
Which maketh holy flowers and fruits spring up.
Here is Macarius, here is Romualdus,
Here are my brethren, who within the cloisters
Their footsteps stayed and kept a steadfast heart."

CHAPTER IX.
THE HOLY GRAIL.

“And, all at once, as there we sat, we heard
A crackling and a rising of the roofs,
And rending, and a blast, and overhead
Thunder, and in the thunder was a cry.
And in the blast, there smote along the hall
A beam of light seven times more clear than day ;
And down the long beam stole the Holy Grail—
All overcover'd with a luminous cloud,
And none might see who bare it ; and it past.”

TENNYSON.

CHAPTER IX.

THE HOLY GRAIL.

OF all legends that of the Holy Grail is most elaborate in detail, most varied in form, most vivid in colouring. I have before me a version of it in French, which fills three portly volumes. It also exists in German; and the opinion of many literary antiquaries is, that it was originally derived from a Welsh source. Undoubtedly there are strong points of resemblance between stories told by versifiers on the Continent and by bards in the Principality; notwithstanding this, they differ materially in some characteristic incidents, still more in their tone and spirit. The former exhibit a pagan imagination, the latter are intensely catholic.

In the French versions Joseph of Arimathæa plays a prominent part. He is the early custodian of the precious vessel. That vessel first belonged to Simon the leper, and then, through a Jew who obtained it of Simon, it came into the possession of Pontius Pilate.

At the same time, in the confusions and incon-

sistencies of the narrative, the Grail is spoken of as used at the institution of the Lord's Supper, and also as the basin in which the Roman Governor washed his hands at the Saviour's trial. According to another reading, Joseph, after the last supper, went to the chamber where it had been eaten, and found the dish in which the passover was served. He secured it, and took it home with him. Notwithstanding, we are also told, that when Joseph (who is represented as a favourite officer and friend of the Roman Government) heard of the death of Jesus, he came to Pilate, and said, "I have served thee for a long time, me and my cavaliers, without any recompense. To-day I am come to request a return for my services." Pilate asked, "What shall I give?" Joseph asked for the body of Jesus. It was granted. Pilate added, "You loved this prophet very much. Accept this vessel found in the house of Simon." Joseph bowed, and thanked the giver.

In process of time the enemies of Joseph plotted against him, and effected his imprisonment, in which condition he remained forty-two years. During that time he was provided with none of the necessaries of life, but the Grail stood him in the stead of all human provisions. According to the Bollandists, Joseph preserved some of the Saviour's blood, and entrusted it to the patriarchs of Jerusalem, who kept it, down to the thirteenth

century, when the treasure was handed to the Knights Templars. The legends respecting Joseph's voyage to Britain the learned editors of the *Acta Sanctorum* (March xvii., vol. ii., 504) regard as fabulous. These stories have been treated by writers, ancient and modern, with great freedom. The former say that Joseph first went over with Mary, Martha, and Lazarus, to the coast of France; and some represent that he proceeded to Spain, and then came to our own country. Dr. Alford gives play to his own imagination in the Ballad of Glastonbury :—

- “ At once the flood of the Severn sea
 Flowed over half the plain,
And a hundred capes, with huts and trees,
 Above the flood remain :
'Tis water here and water there,
 And the lordly Parret's way
Hath never a trace on its pathless face—
 As in the former day.
- “ Of shining sails that thronged that stream
 There resteth never a one ;
But a little ship to that inland sea
 Comes bounding in alone ;
With stretch of sail and tug of oar
 It comes full merrily,
And the sailors chant, as they pass the shore,
 ‘ Tibi Gloria Domine.’
- “ Nights and days on the watery ways
 Our vessel hath slidden on,
Our arms have never tired of toil,
 Our stores have long been done ;

Sweet Jesus hath sped us over the wave,
By coasts and along the sea,
And we sing, as we pass each rising land,
'Tibi Gloria Domine.'

"Sweet Jesus hath work for us to do
In a land of promise fair ;
Our vessel is steered by an angel-hand
Until it bring us there :
To our Captain given, a sign from Heaven
Our token true shall be ;
And we sing, as we wait for the Promise-sign,
'Tibi Gloria Domine.'

"When a dark-green hill shall spire aloft
Into the pure blue sky,
Most like to Tabor's holy mount
Of vision blest and high ;
Straight to that hill our bounding prow
Unguided shall pass and free ;
Sweet Jesus hath spoken, and we believe :
'Tibi Gloria Domine.'"

Upon their reaching the destined spot, they were famished, but they met a poor woman who had a quantity of bread, which was marvellously multiplied for their support. Thus the miracle of our Lord, when He fed the multitude beside the Lake of Galilee, was repeated on the shores of our own country.

St. Joseph, according to a legend current in Glastonbury, landed not far from the town, at a place where an oak was planted in commemoration of the event. He and his companions, it is said, walked thence to a hill situated to the south. There,

being weary, they sat down to rest. Joseph had a staff cut from a hawthorn tree, which he planted in the ground, and it grew vigorously, and blossomed ever after on Christmas Day. The story has given rise to much inquiry and correspondence, and until a late period many believed in the miracle. It is further said that he constructed the first oratory in England of wicker twigs, a precursor of the magnificent abbey which was founded on the same site.

Glastonbury in early ages was an "Island rising from the estuary of the Brue, the glassy clearness of whose waters gained for it the name by which it is said to have been known to the Britons, *Ynys-witren*, or *Ynys-gwydryn*, which has descended to later times in the Anglo-Saxon *Glaestingabyrig*, and the modern Glastonbury." This ingenious piece of etymology will not, I think, satisfy all my readers. We get on safer ground when told that the Britons knew it by the name of Avalon or Avilion, where we reach the land of King Arthur and the Round Table.

"The island valley of Avilion
Where falls not hail, or rain, or any snow,
Nor ever wind blows loudly, but it lies
Deep meadowed, happy, fair with orchard lawns,
And bowery hollows crowned with summer sea."

Here, some traditions say, King Arthur was buried, also the penitent Guinevere; and people once

thought that there were found in a great oak coffin bones of a giant, and also a lock of golden hair. The relics were removed to Glastonbury church, and were seen by the antiquary Leland in the sixteenth century. Thus Joseph of Arimathæa and King Arthur became connected with each other ; but a more wonderful connection is brought out in the French legends of the Grail. Warton, in his "History of Poetry," informs us that in an old English translation of a poem entitled "Le Conqueste de Sangreal," there is a great deal about King Evalach, King Mordrens, Sir Nesciens, Joseph of Arimathæa, and other heroes, who afterwards give place to King Arthur, King Brangors, King Loth, and the monarchs and champions of the British line. "The quest of the Sangrail, as it is called, in which devotion and necromancy are equally concerned, makes a considerable part of King Arthur's romantic history, and was one grand object of the Knights of the Round Table." The wild and uncurbed imagination of the old legend is made familiar to English readers by Lord Tennyson's "Idyll of the King."

To return to the French version. Christ had early appeared to Joseph in a vision, commanding him to go forth and preach the Gospel in foreign lands, without money, only taking the wondrous dish, in which he would find all he wanted. Wherever he went, he told the story of Christ's birth, life, death,

resurrection, ascension, and His sending down the Holy Ghost; at the same time, Joseph explained the meaning of these Divine facts. The Holy Ghost, says the legend, descended on him like a flame of fire; a sweet wind blew, and Jesus spake and asked His love. Then the ark, with the Holy Grail, opened and revealed its treasures,—a cross, a lance, a sponge, and a man wearing a red robe, and five angels standing by the son of Joseph of Arimathæa. Episcopal garments were also brought out, and Josephes, the son of Joseph, was ordained bishop, and clothed as such; the garments put upon him being emblems of purity, honesty, suffering, and love. A consecrated ring placed on his finger showed his marriage to the Church. A soft, sweet wind gently breathed, and a voice told Joseph and his company that Jesus had bought them with His blood; that they should love Him with more than filial affection, that He had given them the Holy Ghost, and put more honour on them than He had done upon Israel of old. “Beware,” He said, “that ye be not like them. If ye will be My sons I will be your Father: you shall have My Spirit, and I will dwell with you, though ye see Me not.” Then came a revelation of Christ to Joseph’s son, who saw Him nailed to the cross, and the lance piercing His side, and the blood and water pouring out, and the Grail dish under His feet. Josephes was consecrated with holy oil, after-

wards preserved by an angel, and used at the coronation of British kings down to King Arthur's father.

According to one version Joseph had committed the Grail to the charge of his nephew ; according to another it was preserved in heaven till there should arise on earth a race of heroes worthy of being its guardians.

At length there sprung from this line a certain king to whom angels brought Joseph's priceless vessel. For it the king built a receptacle after the model of Solomon's temple in Jerusalem ; but the Grail could not be seen except by the pure in heart. A taint of sin blinded men's eyes to the holy vision. One day a dove appeared at the palace window, with a golden saucer which sent forth a sweet odour, as "though all the fragrance in the world had been there." Those sitting at table found in it "all manner of meats and drinks." A damsel, passing fair, also came in with a golden cup, and the king cried, "This is the richest thing that any man hath." The king saw the wonder, so did a knight named Bors ; to many it was invisible. Bors was led within a large chamber, where were many doors, which he commanded to be closed, that nobody might intrude ; and in his seclusion he beheld a long spear with a head to it, which shone like a burning taper. It inflicted on him a wound which grieved him sore. And, again, as Arthur, with his

knights, was sitting at the Round Table, they heard a sound, as of thunder, and in burst a stream of light, brighter than the sun, and all present were illuminated "by the grace of the Holy Ghost." Each was transfigured, and appeared more beautiful than ever, which so astonished the company, that they were silent, as if "they had been dumb." Then came into the hall "the Holy Grail, covered with white samite; yet none could see it, or who bare it, and the hall was filled with odours, and every knight had meat and drink before him, such as he best loved in this world." After the vessel had been miraculously carried about, it departed suddenly, and the knights wist not where it went. How all this was known while the object was invisible is not explained.

The following passage is given by Baring Gould in his "Curious Myths of the Middle Ages," Second Series:—

"Perceval was the son of a poor widow in Wales, brought up by her in a forest far removed from all warlike images. One day he saw a knight ride past, and from that moment he had no rest until his mother gave him arms, and let him ride to the court of King Arthur. On his way he saw a tent, in which lay a beautiful damsel asleep. Perceval took the ring from her finger, ate and drank at the table which was spread in the tent, and then pursued his course. As he entered the court at Cardueil, a felon knight stole

the goblet from the king's table. Perceval went in pursuit. One evening he entered a castle where lay a sick king on a couch. The door of the hall opened, and there came out a servant bearing a bleeding lance" (this is a prominent object in the legends), "others with golden candlesticks, and finally the holy Grail. Perceval asked no questions, and was reproached on leaving the castle for not making inquiries into the mystery of the Grail. Afterwards he undertook the quest of this marvellous vessel, but had great difficulty in finding again the castle of the wounded king. When his search was crowned with success, he asked the signification of the mystic rite which took place before his eyes, and was told that the king was a Fisher, descended from Joseph of Arimathæa, and uncle of Perceval—that the spear was that which had pierced the Saviour's side, and that the Grail was the vessel in which the sacred blood of Christ had been collected."

The search after the Grail is described by Lord Tennyson

"Said Percevale,
'I swear a vow before them all that I,
Because I had not seen the Grail, would ride
A twelvemonth and a day in quest of it,
Until I found and saw it as the nun,
My sister, saw it : and Galahad sware the vow,
And good Sir Bors, our Lancelot's cousin, sware,
And Lancelot sware, and many among the knights,
And Gawain sware, and louder than the rest.'"

When they returned, King Arthur put the question—

“ ‘Hast thou seen the Holy Cup
That Joseph brought of old to Glastonbury?’ ”

Afterwards Arthur said to Bors—

“ ‘Hail, Bors ! if ever loyal man and true
Could see it, thou hast seen the Grail.’ ”

And Bors—

“ ‘Ask me not, for I may not speak of it,
I saw it.’ And the tears were in his eyes.”

It is apparent that a vein of allegorical truth runs through parts of the legend—the wonderful properties of the vessel ; the sustenance it yielded to St. Joseph ; the supply of all kinds of human wants rendered to its possessors ; the revelation it made of the Saviour’s cross ; the purchase of souls by the shedding of His blood ; the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in the children of God ; and the inability of impure minds to discern these wonders. How plainly such illustrations and allusions point to spiritual realities, venerated by devout minds in all ages. They shine like gems amidst the dust and refuse of the widely scattered story.

In one part there is an express parable, representing sinners as imprisoned, and sin itself as coming from the flesh rather than the spirit, and the prisoner as bound with chains, and Christ as bringing man out of the dungeon, and the sinner, in his sin, as losing the very “limbs of his soul.”

Sweetness, religion, reverence, purity, mercy—these are described

“As spiritual hands and feet,
With which the body is dressed full sweet.”

Other allegories, amidst much that is absurd in legends of the Grail, also occur ; and they give a marked character to the French, German, and English forms as compared with the earlier and perhaps original Welsh story. Many intertwinings make it difficult to unravel the drift of the whole plot, but a Christian stamp here and there is manifest enough. The Welsh tradition speaks of the miraculous virtues of the Grail—of its healing diseases, staunching blood, and resuscitating dead bodies ; also of the inability of those thus restored to divulge the mysteries of their experience. It tells how, at a banquet to an Irish king, Bran, a Welsh prince, presented to him the holy bowl as an unequalled gift. When he had done so he regretted his liberality, and some years later a war broke out between him and his royal guest. He found then, to his great dismay, that every soldier in the enemy's ranks could be restored to life by means of the wonder-working bowl. The Welshman, however, at last managed to strike off the head of his foe, and to cast it, streaming with blood, into the receptacle for so many charms, when it suddenly burst, and its virtues ceased for evermore.

CHAPTER X

ANGLO-SAXON SAINTS.

“ As on the front
Of some cathedral pile, ranged orderly,
Rich tabernacles throng, of sainted men
Each in his high day robes magnificent,
Some topped with crowns—

. . . while round the walls,
And in the corbels of the massy nave,
All circumstance of living child, and man,
And heavenly influence, in parables
Of daily passing forms, is pictured forth—
So all the beautiful and seemly things
That crowd the earth, within the humble soul,
Have place and order due.”

DEAN ALFORD.

CHAPTER X.

ANGLO-SAXON SAINTS.

ANGLO-SAXON saints include many bishops, nuns, and kings. Amongst canonized bishops, St. Chad, who died in A.D. 673, appears conspicuously on the pages of Bede, the historian. First he was Bishop of York, which at that time belonged to the Northumbrian kingdom, and there he laboured for the conversion of the pagan inhabitants; then he was transferred to Lichfield, in the kingdom of Mercia. Lichfield means "dead men's field," and is supposed to have been so called from a slaughter on the spot of British Christians by Saxon invaders. Canon Bright, in his early Church History, gives a legendary sketch, where he says: "If a high wind swept over the moors at Lavington, or we may add, around the little cathedral of Lichfield, he at once gave up his reading, and implored the Divine mercy for all mankind. If it increased, he would shut his book, and prostrate himself in prayer. If it rose to a storm, with rain, or thunder, or lightning, he would repair to the Church, and give himself with a

fixed mind to prayer and recitation of Psalms until the weather cleared up. If questioned about this he would quote the Psalmist's words, 'The Lord thundered out of heaven,' and urge the duty of preparing, by a serious repentance, for 'that tremendous time when the heavens and the earth should be on fire, and the Lord should come in the clouds with great power and majesty to judge the quick and the dead.'" "Yet, with all this dread of Divine judgments, Chad, in his own words, 'had a continual love and desire of the heavenly rewards.'" St. Chad used to trudge on foot along the Roman roads, accompanied by monks, chanting psalms, preaching on the highway, and setting up crosses in the villages and towns. He died in early life, and Bede, who was born in the year of the bishop's death, gathered up traditions of it, which he has beautifully embalmed in his history.

One day he was alone, reading or praying in his oratory, when, on a sudden, as he afterwards said, he heard the voice of people singing sweetly. The voices seemed to come from Heaven. He interpreted this as signifying his own departure. He opened the window, and made a motion with His hand, and directed that seven of the brethren should come to him. These he exhorted to cultivate peace and maintain discipline. Then he added, "Death is coming, that lovely guest who is wont to visit the

children of men and call them out of the world." He explained the meaning of the music they had heard. It was the voice of angels promising to fetch him home seven days hence. On the seventh day the "lovely guest" entered St. Chad's room, and delivered him from the prison of a mortal body.

Contemporary with St. Chad was Anna, King of the East Anglians, who fell in battle about the year A.D. 654. He had a remarkable family.

The eldest daughter of Anna was Sexberga, who married Earconbert, King of Kent, and, being left a widow, she undertook the regency, but, getting tired of public duties, she finally sought rest in a convent. The next daughter was Etheldrida, who was enthusiastically devout, and founded a monastery at Ely—then wild and savage, surrounded by swamps and marshes for miles all round. In time the marshes were drained, and the swamps turned into fruitful fields; wheat and barley ripened on land before left to bitterns and wild ducks. A church was built, to be followed by the present cathedral. These two daughters loved each other, and joined to bring the natives of the district into the Church's fold. They had a sister, Witberga, who also consecrated herself to religious service, and after living a solitary, self-denying life, went to Dereham, in Norfolk, where she founded a nunnery.

Whilst Anna's daughters were nuns (there was

another, Æthelberga, who died, a foreign abbess), King Æthelhere also had relations who were abbesses, the most distinguished of them being a sister of Æthelhere's wife—namely, St. Hilda, founder of Whitby Abbey.

At Whitby are found stones resembling rolled-up snakes, sports of nature, which she, as one observes, "amused herself with creating, when weary of producing realities and serious productions. You would think they had even been snakes covered over with a crust of stone. Report ascribes them to the prayers of Hilda, as if changed by her." This story, which refers, of course, to the ammonites on the beach beneath the cliff, is ridiculous enough, but it is only like hundreds more.

Bede has something interesting to say about this memorable woman. She entered the sisterhood with prudence and wisdom, was charitable to the poor, and attached to herself kings and princes, who came to seek her advice. She advised those under her authority to study the Scriptures, to exercise themselves in works of righteousness, that "many might be there found fit for ecclesiastical duties, and to serve at the altar."

During Hilda's infancy her mother dreamed that she was seeking something she had lost; at length she discovered under her dress a precious jewel, which cast such a light as seemed to shine all over the

country. The dream came to pass in the illumination shed by this daughter of hers through her whole lifetime. For the last six years of life her duties were interrupted; but during that period she never ceased to thank God for His goodness, to instruct the sisterhood, and to admonish people all round to serve the Almighty whilst they enjoyed health and strength. In the seventh year her disease proved fatal. "About cock-crowing," after she had received the Communion to comfort her on her way, and had spoken to the servants of Christ in the convent, her voice suddenly ceased as the last messenger approached. This was in A.D. 680.

The nuns said they saw her soul carried up to heaven on angels' wings.

In the same century as that which boasts of St. Chad and St. Hilda, there was born into the world a poor little boy destined to make a broad mark on England's history. His name was Cuthbert, and he first saw the light not far from Melrose, where afterwards in beauty and splendour rose the far-famed abbey which has linked itself romantically with the Church of Scotland. When he was eight years old, playing on the banks of a river, a boy much younger predicted that this Cuthbert, who was then more than a match for his companions in country games, would live to be a great churchman, and ought, therefore, at once to give up childish sports.

After that, as he was keeping sheep in neighbouring fields, he saw the soul of the first bishop of Lindisfarne ascending to Heaven, surrounded by a choir of angels. The sight drew him away from watching flocks, and he entered the monastery of Melrose, then a humble place compared with what it afterwards became. Miracles clustered round him from the commencement of his monkish life. He entertained an angel who asked for shelter; and forthwith, on the departure of the latter, three loaves appeared on the table, no one knew how. Cuthbert fell sick, and was restored in answer to prayer. His master, overtaken by the same disease, told him, "You have recovered, and will live a while longer, but I must die, and I want you to learn of me as long as I can teach." "What shall I read?" asked the pupil. "John the Evangelist," said the instructor. They spent seven days in Scripture study, and the latter did not die before he prophesied that Cuthbert would be a bishop.

Miracles were performed by him at Melrose, and then he left for Lindisfarne, a bleak, melancholy island on the Northumberland shore. After some years he made up his mind to be a hermit, and for that purpose fixed on a ridge of hills near the village of Howburn. Evil spirits abounded thereabouts, dressed like black monks, riding on the backs of she goats, but he drove them away. Some com-

panions helped him to build a home for pilgrims, and when they were digging, there sprung up a fountain which never failed. He would not put off his sandals for a twelvemonth ; and then he changed them because the feast came round to commemorate our Lord's washing the feet of His disciples. After he shut himself up, he would talk through a window, then he closed it ; but whilst retiring from the outside world, he went on, according to Bede, working no end of miracles. At last, his episcopate having been foreshadowed in more than one way, he was elected Bishop of Hexham. Afterwards he became Bishop of Lindisfarne.

But not for long. Cuthbert soon resigned his charge. The monks followed him to the boat waiting to take him away. "When may we look for you again ?" they asked. "When you convey my bones *hither*," he replied.

Then came a chain of wonders, for the record of which he is not responsible, any more than for those already ascribed to him. He was buried by his own direction in a stone coffin near his hermitage, upon this condition : "Know and remember, that if necessity shall ever compel you, out of two misfortunes, to choose one, I would much rather that you should dig up my bones from the grave, and take them with you, where God shall direct, than that you should, on any account, consent to the

iniquity of schismatics, and put your necks under their yoke." The iniquity referred to was adopting ceremonies different from those which had been observed by Cuthbert and his brethren. In obedience to his command, they dug up his corpse eleven years after burial, and found it fresh as when interred. It was carried about afterwards on a car, and churches were built at places where the procession stopped. An attempt to bury him in Ireland was frustrated by a storm, in which the monks lost a beautiful MS. volume. It fell overboard amidst piteous lamentations, but was restored, to their great joy; for they found it on the sands three miles above watermark, "more beautiful than before, both within and without, being no way injured by the salt water, but rather polished by some heavenly hand."

Whatever is thought of that story, the book itself may now be seen in the British Museum, and a beautiful book it is.

Back to England came the company, with both body and book, and we find them somewhere near York in A.D. 995. Then the corpse, in its coffin, was carried to Ripon, next to Durham, next to Lindisfarne, next to Durham again, where it remained. In all the stages of this unequalled journey, the saint, we are told, watched over and guided the movement of his own mortal remains.

Where in the story of St. Cuthbert—and the

same may be said of other stories now related—the strictly historical ends and the legendary begins, with its fictitious assertions, it is difficult to say. I leave all this as I find it; and it would be foreign to the purpose of my book to follow the condition and fate of Cuthbert's body after its interment at Durham. Canon Raine has thoroughly discussed the points of controversy connected with it in his elaborate work on the subject.

Cuthbert was Bishop of Lindisfarne from A.D. 685 to 688. It was the season for legend growing. St. Erkewald was Bishop of London at that time, and round his memory cluster astounding miracles. He rode out into the forests near the city to preach to the Saxon peasantry. The cart which carried him lost one of its wheels, but he continued to travel on the other without any hindrance to the equilibrium of the vehicle. When he died at Barking, the monks of Chertsey hastened to carry off his body as a precious relic, but this was resisted by the canons and population of London, who resolved not to lose their venerated Diocesan. After much strife, and many tears, and earnest appeals to Heaven, a miracle determined the controversy. They came to the banks of the river Lea, and there, as the metropolitan clergy intoned the Litany, the marvel of the Jordan was repeated, and they triumphantly marched through the bed of the stream, dry shod, on their way to

St. Paul's. The legend increased the value of the relic.

Soon after this, Egwine, Bishop of Mercia, a famous preacher and a great revivalist, having converted many Saxon herdsmen in Feckenham, met with a revelation from above, which determined him to found a monastery at Evesham, in Worcestershire. Eoves, one of his serfs, whilst tending swine, had a vision of the Virgin. Her brightness darkened the sun, and she was fairer than all the daughters of men. He related to his master what he had seen, who, after fasting and prayer, and walking barefoot, came to the spot where the vision had been revealed. The vision was repeated on the spot, with the additional appearance of two other virgins, whom she surpassed in stature and loveliness, whilst her raiment seemed whiter than lilies, and more fragrant than roses. In one hand she held a book, in the other a cross of gold. The miracle is recorded in the charter of endowment as Egwine's own belief; if the charter be not genuine, the wonder must have been invented afterwards to give more honour to the foundation. "I set to work," it is written in the document, "and clearing the ground from thorns and brambles, by the blessing of God, accomplished my design." A superadded legend informs us that he made a pilgrimage to Rome in iron fetters, by way of penance, and threw the key

of the monastery into the Severn or the Avon; the key was afterwards found in the belly of a fish. Why the key was thrown away I do not know. Alban Butler relates the marvel of its recovery without the least hesitation. Such a story is only a specimen of many more characteristic of the age.

There are three sainted Anglo-Saxon kings connected with three ecclesiastical foundations in this country: Oswin, and the priory of Tynemouth; Edmund, and the monastery of Bury St. Edmunds; Edward the Confessor, and Westminster Abbey.

On the reef of rocks—which of old was the dread of pilots, as in stormy weather they entered the mouth of the river dividing Northumberland from Durham,—there still remain shattered but stately relics of a building where the body of St. Oswin, King of Deira, is said to have been interred. It was the costliest treasure of that noted fane, which in its pride and glory looked down on land and sea, soon after William the Conqueror had made the north of the Tyne his own dominion. Tynemouth priory, with its new conventual church, was founded by Earl Robert de Mowbray, and the body of the saint was translated thither in A.D. 1110. There rose

“The relic shrine of cost,
With ivory and gems embossed”;

and many a pilgrim knelt on the steps, “while the wind swept the neighbouring rocks, and the sea,

in heavy billows, came rolling in with majesty and grandeur upon the beach below."

Oswin had died between three and four hundred years before this. Little or nothing was known of him after his murder. The Danes devastated the country, and the King of Deira was forgotten. "But in the year of grace A.D. 1065," says Mr. Gibson, who has written a large work on the priory, "a monk named Ædmund, who was a religious and devout man, and sacrist of the monastery, on a certain night, after the nocturnal vigils, had performed his devotions in the church, as he was accustomed, when there stood before him a man of radiant aspect, comely countenance, and noble stature, who, with kindness of speech, thus addressed him: "Brother Ædmund, Brother Ædmund." Being made more confident, Ædmund, with reverence, inquired, "Who art thou, lord?" "I," said the angelic vision, "am King Oswin, who, having been wickedly betrayed by Hunewald, was slain in a dreadful death by King Oswy, and, unknown to all men, I am buried in this church; arise, and tell Ægelwine, the bishop, to seek my body beneath the pavement of this oratory, and to raise it to a more becoming situation there." Such is "the legend of the blessed Oswin, king and martyr of his passion and martyrdom"; and it is another specimen of many legends in those days, which, composed for obvious reasons,

were believed by multitudes who were ever panting after news of such astounding marvels. Why St. Oswin, who was slain by order of the cruel Oswy, from revenge and ambition, should be deemed a martyr in the cause of religion is not made clear. But so he figures in monkish history, so he was venerated in Tynemouth priory. Few specific legends of this Anglo-Saxon king are on record, but he is generally extolled for his humility, his beneficence, and his devotion. A story is told of his giving a valuable horse to Bishop Aidan, who oftener walked than rode. Riding on this royal steed, all richly caparisoned, he met a beggar, who asked an alms. Aidan, dismounting, bestowed on the man the king's present. Oswin, hearing of it, asked the bishop, as they sat at dinner, "Wherefore hast thou given to a beggar the horse of a king, which it became thee alone to possess? Had we no horses of a baser kind to give away in charity?" "What say you, my lord king?" rejoined Aidan. "Is the offspring of a mare dearer to thee than a son of God?" The king asked the bishop's forgiveness, and acknowledged that any man, however humble, was of greater worth than any horse in the royal stable.

The abbey of St. Edmundsbury does not take its name from the town; the town takes its name from the abbey. Monasteries were often mothers of towns,

nursing the humble homes which gathered around them. The abbey rose out of the death of Edmund the Martyr, in A.D. 870. He reigned over a district in eastern England, and was crowned on Christmas Day of the year A.D. 855. Within little more than a century after his martyrdom, his life was written by a Canterbury monk, who derived materials from Archbishop Dunstan. The latter had listened to stories about Edmund from an old man who had been his sword-bearer.

Edmund lived some time in retirement, and studied the Psalms, so that he could repeat them by heart. He does not seem to have been much of a warrior, for he loved quietness, and eschewed strife.

The times, however, would not let him live as he liked. England was harassed by Danish invasions; fierce sailors, in their swift boats, scoured the North Sea, and swooped down like eagles on the Northumbrian coast. They carried off Saxon wealth, and when they had spent it they came back for more. Nor were they satisfied with what they stole; they made a lasting lodgment in the country, and took possession of lands and houses in Northumberland, Mercia, and East Anglia. Under the banner of their white horse they swept over Suffolk, and burnt the town. Thetford, Peterborough, Crowland, Thorney, and Ely were then the chief abbeys in east England. These, as religious institutions opposed to their own

paganism, the Danes ruthlessly destroyed. "They came and burned," says the Saxon chronicle respecting one of these monasteries, "and beat it down, slew the abbot and monks, and all they found there. And that place, which was before full rich, they reduced to nothing." Edmund went forth to meet these invaders. But he shrank from sacrificing his soldiers' lives, and from sending his foes into eternity. The Dane was too strong for the East Anglian. We read of a battle near Bury, after which the Christians fled, and the heathen triumphed. The Danes sent to Edmund, who had taken refuge at Hoxne, near Diss, upon the banks of the Waveney, and offered him life on condition of his abandoning the Gospel. Such terms he could not accept. He would rather die for Christ. On the whole, it would appear that wars between Danes and Englishmen turned much more on the opposition of heathenism to Christianity than is commonly supposed. The Danes came as robbers, but they came also as pagans, bent on the ruin of a religion opposed to that of their fathers. As Edmund would not submit, the conquerors seized him as a prisoner. Then they bound him to a tree, beat him with clubs, and shot at him with arrows. St. Sebastian figures as a mark for the archers, and the old painters never seem to tire of painting him stuck all over with darts. Edmund is to be coupled with Sebastian in the

endurance of this kind of torture. At length a chieftain ordered the king's head to be cut off, and when this was done the head was thrown into a thicket.

Thus far we are on pretty safe historical ground, now we get into the legendary domain. The king's servants and friends mourned their loss, and were anxious to recover their sovereign's remains. They went into the forest, searching after the slain. They lost themselves, and were separated. "Where are you?" one cried out to another. A mysterious voice answered, "Here, here, here." They went towards the spot whence the voice proceeded, and there they found the royal head amidst bushes, guarded by a wolf. When they took up the remains the wolf tamely followed, and afterwards returned to its lair "drooping and melancholy." Mention is also made of a pillar of light guiding the searchers.

The remains were conveyed to a little wooden chapel at Hoxne. The head and the body became united, the severance leaving a purple, or, as some say, a scarlet thread. Other miracles followed. Wonderful cures were wrought by the relics. People flocked to the place, and to provide for the pilgrims the body was taken to the present Bury St. Edmunds, and there enshrined. It was not decayed, not putrid; but, like St. Cuthbert's, whole and

quite fresh, as when slain at first. The only testimony to this is the story of a woman who lived a hermit's life near the shrine, and used once a year to go and cut the hair and pare the nails of the sainted one. Everybody did not believe that the body remained incorruptible, and a nobleman, named Leofstan, ventured to open the coffin to see how the case really was. He paid for his temerity, and, in the act of lifting the lid, was carried off by a demon.

When East Anglia was invaded in A.D. 1010, the body was carried to London, that the enemy might not lay hold of it. There it remained three years, after which it was brought back to Bury. On its way it rested at the ancient church of Greenstead, near Chipping Ongar; and that curious little building has consequently become famous, like the stations at which St. Cuthbert's corpse successively halted on its changeful journey.

The relics formed capital on which the monks of the abbey traded with advantage. They believed everything in the place belonged to him, and that the existence of his body there was a pledge of his personal protection, if not his spiritual presence. God and St. Edmund are names frequently introduced, and the interference of the latter in the affairs of the abbey is recognised. "St. Edmund grievously punishes those who are afar off, as well as those who are near; how much more will he inflict

vengeance on those who take away his vesture!" So said the abbot when it was proposed to strip the shrine of certain valuables.

The early history of Westminster Abbey is also of a legendary cast.

There was a jungle on the bank of the Thames near London, called Thorney Island. Some monks built a convent on that spot. One stormy night, when the river came rushing along in a mighty torrent, and the winds howled, and the rains beat, and everybody was terror-stricken, there appeared a stranger, who begged a fisherman to ferry him to the convent. Reluctantly, and for the sake of reward, Edericus, so the fisherman is called, rowed the stranger thither. As soon as the two landed on the quaggy shore a miraculous light shone with tranquil brightness from the church windows, and sweet music from angel lips accompanied the illumination. The music ceased, the lights went out, and the boatman returned with his mysterious fare. On landing, the latter disclosed the secret, that he was no other than St. Peter himself, and that he had come to visit the church dedicated to his name, and to perform the consecration of it in his own person. Hence the angels, the music, and the lights. This fisherman was to go and tell the bishop. For a reward, the apostle bid him cast his net into the roaring waters; when he did so, it was soon filled

with a draught of salmon. "You will never lack fish," said the fisherman of Galilee, "so long as you give a tithe of them to the altar of the Church."

The Danes ravaged the banks of the Thames, as they did the banks of the Waveney, and the convent suffered accordingly. Afterwards legends of Edward the Confessor sprung up as a fit sequel to the consecration on that memorable night.

The Confessor devoted himself to the service of St. Peter. When in Normandy, he sought the Apostle's protection, and there vowed he would visit his tomb in Rome.

In connection with this we learn that Brithwold, Bishop of Winchester, had a vision, in which St. Peter announced that the bishop had been chosen to crown a youth, dearly beloved, as king of England. Moreover, a Worcester hermit, one sleepless night, saw St. Peter, "bright and beautiful like a clerk," who told him he was to build at Thorney a Benedictine monastery, which should be the gate of heaven, and the ladder of prayer, whence those who served him should enter the gates of Paradise.

"Edward," as Butler says in his "Lives of the Saints," ascended the throne in the most difficult times of distraction and commotions, both foreign and domestic, and by his piety and simplicity might seem fitter for a cloister than such a crown, yet never was any reign more happy."

The Confessor seems to have been, like Edmund a man of peaceable disposition, addicted to ascetic purity, ritual devotion, and bountiful almsgiving, the qualities of the heart being greater than those of the head; though it is not to be forgotten that moral worth is better than intellectual ability. Graces are above gifts. He married, in imitation of St. Joseph and his wife; Edith is compared to the Virgin Mary. His mother Emma, was accused of being unfaithful to her husband, and submitted to the ordeal of fire when she walked over red-hot ploughshares unharmed, while her eyes looked behind her. This deliverance filled her son with joy, and in return for the favour he richly endowed a church at Winchester. As an instance of his lenity towards offenders, it is related that, as he was apparently asleep, he saw a boy come twice and steal some money out of a heap which the keeper of the privy purse had left on a table. The boy came a third time, when the king told him to beware for the keeper was coming; and if he caught the culprit, he would certainly whip him, and get back what had been stolen. The keeper came, and was in a great rage, but the king bade him be easy, for the lad wanted the money more than they from whom he stole it. This deed does no credit to the justice and wisdom of the sovereign, but it is indicative of his character. Further, he is said to have

carried a cripple on his back, and set him down sound and strong; and to have washed the sores of a woman whom he blessed with the sign of the cross, and so healed her.

Edward the Confessor founded the new Abbey of Westminster in A.D. 1059, and died in A.D. 1066.

I cannot do better than add three more legends related by Dean Stanley.

The first is as follows. "It was at Easter. He was sitting in his gold-embroidered robe, and solemnly crowned, in the midst of his courtiers, who were voraciously devouring their food after the long abstinence of Lent. On a sudden he sank into a deep abstraction. Then came one of his curious laughs, and again his rapt meditation.

He retired into his chamber, and was followed by Duke Harold, the Archbishop, and the Abbot of Westminster. To them he confided his vision. He had seen the seven sleepers of Ephesus suddenly turn from their right sides to their left, and recognised in this omen the sign of war, famine, and pestilence for the coming seventy years, during which the sleepers were to lie in their new position.

Immediately on hearing this the duke despatched a knight, the archbishop, a bishop, the abbot, and a monk to the Emperor of Constantinople. To Mount Celion, under his guidance, they went, and there found the seven sleepers as the king had seen

them. The proof of this portent at once confirmed the king's prevision, and received its confirmation in the violent convulsions which disturbed the close of the eleventh century."

The second legend has a more personal character.

"The king was on his way to the dedication of the chapel of St. John the Evangelist. As Peter, the Prince of the Apostles, was the saint before whom the Confessor trembled with a mysterious awe, John, the Apostle of Love, was the saint whom he venerated with a familiar tenderness. A beggar implored him, for the love of St. John, to bestow alms upon him.

Hugolin was not to be found. In the chest there was no gold or silver. The king remained in silent thought, and then drew off from his hand a ring, 'large, royal, and beautiful,' which he gave to the beggar, who vanished. Two English pilgrims, from the town of Ludlow, shortly afterwards found themselves benighted in Syria, when suddenly the path was lighted up, and an old man, white and hoary, preceded by two tapers, accosted them.

They told him of their country and their saintly king, on which the old man, 'joyously like to a clerk,' guided them to a hostelry, and announced that he was John the Evangelist, the special friend of Edward; and gave them the ring to carry back, with the warning that in six months the king should be with him in Paradise. The pilgrims returned.

They found the king at his palace in Essex, said to be called from this incident *Havering-atte-Bower*, and with a church dedicated to St. John the Evangelist. He acknowledged the ring, and prepared for his end accordingly."

The third legend relates to a period after the Confessor's death.

"A Council was summoned to Westminster, over which the Norman king and the Norman primate presided, and Wulfstan, the Anglo-Saxon bishop, was declared incapable of holding his office, because he could not speak French. The old man, down to this moment compliant even to excess, was inspired with unusual energy. He walked from St. Catherine's Chapel straight into the abbey. The king and the prelates followed. He laid his pastoral staff on the Confessor's tomb before the high altar. First he spoke in Saxon to the dead king: 'Edward, thou gavest me the staff; to thee I return it.' Then, with the few Norman words that he could command, he turned to the living king: 'A better than thou gave it to me; take it if thou canst.' It remained fixed in the solid stone, and Wulfstan was left at peace in his See."

The incorruptibility supposed to attach to so many remains is repeated in the legend of Edward the Confessor. At midnight, on the 13th October, A.D. 1163, the tomb was opened, and the body was

found in perfect preservation, the white, curling beard still visible. The ring of St. John was taken out and kept apart as a relic. A subsequent translation of the corpse occurred when it was taken from the coffin and placed in the shrine built by Henry III.

CHAPTER XI.

MISSIONARIES TO THE SWISS AND THE SCLAVS.

PRAYER FOR MODERN MISSIONARIES.

“Speed Thy servants, Saviour, speed them !
They were bound, but Thou hast freed them.
Now they go to free the slaves ;
Be Thou with them ;
Tis Thine arm alone that saves.

“When they reach the land of strangers,
And the prospect dark appears ;
Nothing seen but toil and dangers,
Nothing felt but doubts and fears,
Be Thou with them ;
Hear their sighs, and count their tears.”

T. KELLY.

CHAPTER XI.

MISSIONARIES TO THE SWISS AND THE SCLAVS.

INTEREST must be felt respecting the diffusion of Christianity amongst pagan nations. Reliable history is vague, but legends are specific. The historian pulls them to pieces, puts aside what is incredible, and weaves into some reasonable pattern what remains. It is curious to place, side by side, the narrative of an old chronicler, and the sketchy generalization of a modern essayist.

I select from a large mass a small handful touching Swiss and Slavonic tribes, binding them together with a strip or two picked up in the Black Forest.

In the first I take, there occurs a name I do not find in any authentic history or in the "Lives of the Saints." The name is that of St. Beat, familiar enough to people who tarry in Swiss scenes and search after legendary and local tales. M. Valayre, in his "Legendes and Chroniques Suisses," tells us that St. Beat, a native of Bretagne, converted from Druidism, went to Helvetia that he might preach

the Gospel there. He was accompanied by one called Achatés, a name which reminds one of Virgil's "fidus Achates."

The missionary declared to the natives the Advent of our Lord, and the salvation He had wrought, also the Divine anger against sin, as shown in the Deluge, and the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah—types of punishment in the future world. The people, alarmed, made a profession of Christianity, destroyed their idol temples, and worshipped the true God. When the prefect of Soleure received tidings of the destruction of heathen gods he was filled with anger. Beat and his companion fled to the mountains. After a journey of some days they reached the smiling vale of Unterseen. The richness of surrounding vegetation, the neighbourhood of the lakes of Thun and Brienz, and the abundance of fish swimming in the waters, made the place an attractive centre for religious work.

Beat and Achatés wandered about till they came to some miserable huts formed by branches of trees. They entered one where the opening served for door and chimney. They dimly discerned inside wild-looking beings, who were astonished at seeing strangers. Beat told them of a God mightier than their idols, and exhorted them to worship Him. They promised friendship with the missionaries if their God would deliver them from an enormous

dragon hard by, which devoured every living thing within reach. Many brave men had perished in seeking to deliver the land from this pest. Beat lifted his eyes to Heaven, and cried, "Great God, permit Thy servant to glorify Thy name, though this should be my last hour." He left the people to seek the dragon. He climbed a mountain, said to be its haunt, close to a waterfall, the roar of which guided the saint. He reached a deep dark cavern, looking after the monster. Soon it came before him, its mouth covered with blood, and sending forth a horrible stench. St. Beat, strong in the power of God, met the dragon, which, on seeing him lifted its wings, and opened its jaws to swallow him up. He fell down on his knees and prayed. The huge reptile trembled, St. Beat made a sign of the cross, when the creature took flight, and flapped its wings with such a noise that the forest trembled with the echo. It disappeared for ever.

The inhabitants of the valley followed their deliverer, and found him at prayer. The only recompense for their deliverance which he would accept was the grotto where they found him. In that retreat he spent the rest of his days, instructing the inhabitants who flocked to hear his words. He told them of the Creation, of the Fall, of the expulsion from Paradise, and of the redemption of man. He civilized savage nations, and taught people

how to weave nets for catching fish, and how to cultivate the soil. As his end approached, he directed his disciple, Achatés, to bury him at the entrance of his grotto, and he died in the arms of this faithful attendant "the 9th of May, in the year A.D. 112, aged ninety years." It is remarkable what precise dates are given in some legends, when the whole is a fiction.

What are we to make of the story? Is it the pure invention of an age afterwards, or did it originate in the labours of some real man living at a later period than the second century, who first preached to the wild Swiss? Or was it a pictorial development of traditional ideas and incidents, the flourish about a dragon being only intended to symbolize satanic power and wrath?

St. Gall, the next Christian hero in Helvetia, is an undoubted historical character, of whom we have a legendary history written by Walfridus Strabo, a monk of St. Fulda. He was born of noble parents in Ireland, and trained for work by St. Columba, abbot of Iona. Columba and he are closely connected, but I shall separate the story of the one from the other. Being driven away from a monastery, which Columba founded by the help of the pious King of Burgundy, he proceeded to Bregentz, at the eastern end of the fair lake of Constance, by the foot of the Voralberg. Then he and his companions

built rude cells, and went amongst the people preaching the Gospel. Many were converted, and cast their idols into the waters. The missionaries were scattered, but St. Gall remained in the neighbourhood because of illness. He had secretly formed a vow that he would lead a life of mortification far away from worldly vanities, when, accompanied by a deacon, he walked until he entangled his foot in some bramble bushes. Héltibold,—that is the name given,—seeing him on his knees, thought that he had hurt himself, when St. Gall cried out that he believed Heaven meant him to go no further. He chose the spot as his future abode, and there planted a rod of hazel wood, shaped into a cross, fastening to it relics which he had carried round his neck. His companion encouraged him to take nourishment after his fatigue, offering him a piece of bread and a little water. Then they thought they would light a fire, and cook some fish, when suddenly the deacon saw a couple of big bears. St. Gall told him God had sent these animals to be employed as their servants. So he ordered one of the bears to cut wood and bring it to the fire, which the creature did, and received a piece of bread for his pains.

The missionaries were haunted by evil spirits. A couple of them appeared on the shore in the guise of beautiful women about to bathe; but the pure-minded men resisted their blandishments. Another

wonder recorded is that snakes which had infested the country now disappeared, just as was the case in Ireland after St. Patrick had reached its shores.

At this time, a beautiful daughter of Gunzo, duke of the territory, was possessed by an evil spirit; whereupon the duke and the lady's lover, son of King Theodoric, sent to St. Gall to come and deliver Her Highness from the evil one. A scene ensued, minutely painted, in which the sensual, the grotesque, and the comic are strangely blended; at last the holy man laid his hand on the damsel's head, and said to the devil, "I command thee, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, to come out of her." She opened her eyes. An absurd dialogue follows between the demon and the miracle-worker, but of course the latter gains the victory, and the former is described as issuing in a surprising way from the damsel's mouth. A marriage between her and the prince was arranged, and grand preparations were made. Chariots were filled with gorgeous presents; slaves were in attendance, men and women; treasures were offered to the bride, but she asked for seven days' rest, that she might recover strength before the bridal. It all ended in her taking the veil as a nun, according to one version; according to another, she married Sigebert, and became ancestress of the counts of Hapsburg. Gunzo, the duke, offered St. Gall great riches, and bestowed on him

the whole country surrounding his cell. The saint went to his retreat, and one night had a vision, which he described to the deacon: "Prepare what is needful for celebrating the Divine mysteries, for I have seen the radiant figure of my Lord, and Father Columba, who appeared, and gave me to understand that he had changed the troubles of this world for the joys of Paradise."

The duke, the episcopal synod, and the people in general, begged St. Gall to accept the See of Constance, but he would not. His deacon was elected instead.

The hermitage of St. Gall did not continue solitary; a number of disciples came round and lived in little cells. One day, as he went to the celebration of mass, and stood at the altar, he was seized with fever, and died before he could reach his hermitage. Miracles were wrought with his clothes; and when all was ready for his funeral, no human power could remove the corpse. It was remembered he had said two wild horses were to be yoked to his bier. Accordingly, horses were attached without reins. A procession advanced, the people singing psalms until they reached "the cell of the man of God," then the horses stopped. Where he lived, there he was buried, and the grand monastery of St. Gall arose, which gave a name to the city which gathered around it.

That St. Gall was a real person, and that he preached the Gospel in Switzerland, there can be no doubt, also that a monastery was built over his remains, we know ; but the origin and details of the legend are as puzzling as those of St. Beat. Demoniacal machinery is common to all stories of this sort. The possession of men and women by Satanic powers was believed by everybody when the legend was written ; nor has it ceased to be believed in our day ; for I saw myself, in the church of St. Agnes, outside Rome, a poor woman under the hands of a priest, near the altar, who, by extraordinary efforts, strove to bring *out of her mouth* a devil ; by which the people, as they assured my daughter and me, believed the poor creature to be tormented. And, until a late period, belief in witchcraft extensively prevailed.

There is a good sermon preached by St. Gall, reported by Neander in his Life of that evangelist.

To the north of the Lake of Constance lay the Hercynian, now the Black Forest. It is a land of heroic myths, such as form the Old World Niebelungen-Lied ; and amidst them appears a legend, relating to a period in the early history of German Christianity, which comes as a connecting link between the Church of the Swiss and the Church of the Slavs.

A prince of the Huns fell in love with a Black

Forest maiden. He was a heathen, she a Christian. Though she responded to his affection she shrank from his paganism, and to preserve her religion she repaired to a forest, and spent there the life of a hermit. She carved on the bark of a tree the history of her experience, and, attended by a tame dog, at length died, the faithful creature digging a grave for its mistress.

In a few weeks the lover came to this spot, read the inscription, recognised the object of his attachment, and rejoiced that he had become a Christian, having been converted after the maiden had fled. He, in his turn, abandoned the world, and one winter's night was visited in his cell by a pilgrim, who accepted his hospitality. The stranger tarried till the morning, when he awoke at the break of dawn, and kissed the brow of the still slumbering hermit. That kiss was the seal of death. But at that moment the pilgrim threw off his disguise, and unfolded the wings of an angel. These he wrapped round the departing spirit, and then bore it away to the celestial home, where the faithful Notburga—that was the loved maiden's name—awaited his arrival in answer to her prayers.

This is but one of many legends with which clockmakers in the romantic Black Forest like to amuse themselves.

It is time to turn to Slavonia. In some parts

included within that comprehensive geographical name, Christianity at an early period became established; and a martyrology, relative to the fourth century, speaks of St. Quirinus, who was bishop of Liscia, a town in the south of Upper Pannonia. Refusing to burn incense on a heathen altar, he was condemned to be thrown from a bridge, with a millstone tied round his neck, when a miracle followed. Notwithstanding the heavy weight he floated on the top of the stream. There he preached to the people on shore until his spirit ascended to heaven. He is described by St. Jerome, and his memory is celebrated in one of the hymns of Prudentius—

“Dejectum placidissimo
Amnis vertice suscipit;
Nec mergi patitur sibi,
Miris vasta natatibus
Saxi pondera sustinens.”

It seems that he sometimes is called St. Florian, and he appears in three pictures by the German painter, Altdorfer: first, going to execution; secondly, on the bridge, where he appears as a boy, with the millstone by his side, waiting to be thrown into the water; and thirdly, taken up after being drowned, and prepared for burial by three women who attended to his remains.

We find a still more wonderful transformation effected when we light on the following passage in Dr. Stanley's "Eastern Church."

“ A saint of doubtful name and origin started from Italy on one of those voyages which mediæval credulity delighted to invent and to receive. He was thrown into the Tiber with a millstone round his neck, and on or with this millstone passed out of the Mediterranean Sea into the Atlantic Ocean; through the islands of the Baltic he passed on into the Neva; through the Neva he reached the Lake of Ladoga; from the Ladoga Lake he passed into the broad Volkhoff; and from the Volkhoff, on the shores of the Lake of Ilmen, he found himself by the walls of the great Novgorod, the irresistible republic of old Russia, the precursor of the northern ‘ capital of the new.’ ”

A fairy mountain in Bosnia teems with legends of an evil spirit which haunts the region; and we are told by Mr. Evans in his Bosnian tour, that when “ the trees begin to drip with grisly lichen, and the trees grow scarred and sooty with storm and lightning, and a cloudy pall obscures the sun,” and a gust of wind rattles through the wood, the superstitious peasant thinks he sees the demon on a coal-black stag, lashing it along with a whip of serpents.

St. Saba, missionary to the Goths, is a favourite patron saint in that part of the world, and it is related of him that, being martyred for his faith, by means of an axle tree his persecutors fastened round

his neck, he said to them, as he expired, "I see what you cannot ; I see persons on the other side the river waiting to receive my soul, and conduct it to the seat of glory ; they only wait the moment in which it will leave my body."

The missionaries to the Sclavs in the ninth century were Cyril and Methodius. Cyril prepared for his mission by studying at Cherson. There he discovered the existence of the remains of St. Clement of Rome, who had been sent into exile by the prefect, Mamertinus, and had made two hundred converts, whom he baptized in water gushing from a rock, whither he was led by the guidance of a lamb. The Emperor Trojan sent officers, who seized Clement, and tying him to an anchor plunged him into the sea. His disciples knelt down on the shore, and prayed that his body might be restored : so it was. The waves retired, and disclosed a tomb built without hands over the missionary's remains. These remains were discovered by Cyril, who carried them about with him wherever he went.

Cyril was joined by his brother Methodius, and they are said to have travelled and preached together. They converted and baptized certain princes and their people ; but their most important work was a translation of the Scripture, in part, into the Sclavonic tongue. Cyril wished to visit Rome. Thither he and his brother went, carrying with them the relics

of St. Clement. Cyril died in Rome, and was buried in the church of San Clemente by the side of the primitive bishop whose memory he so much revered.

There is another legend about Methodius to the effect that he painted a picture of the last judgment, which so moved the heart of Boigoris, king of the Bulgarians, that; in order to flee from the wrath to come, he embraced Christianity; and at his baptism took the name of Michael.

In the tenth century a Bohemian princess was the means of introducing Christianity to Poland, and many peculiarities of the Sclavonian rite were transplanted into the National Church which was formed there. Cracow became the seat of a bishopric, and in the eleventh century St. Stanislaus figures as one of the prelates. After his death a family travelled to the city to witness the enshrinement of his remains. Respecting the journey, the following absurd legend is told by a canon of the church.

A horse which drew the carriage fell down dead by the way, and the coachman threw its skin over a stick which he carried on his shoulder. The party trudged forward on foot till they heard the creature neighing behind them. "Here is our old horse coming after us at a trot," exclaimed the mother. Wondrous to relate, the skin had fallen from the stick, and could nowhere be found, but on

the back of the resuscitated beast. Butler does not relate this absurdity, but he does gravely repeat a legend to the effect, that when the saint had bought some land for the Church, he could not make out a title, because the person who sold it was dead, and had left no instrument of conveyance. The king was on the point of seizing it, but Stanislaus went to the man's grave, and brought him into court alive, to give evidence of the legal transaction. The story "must be received with caution," says Mr. Baring Gould. In a traveller's version of the matter I find the risen witness metamorphosed into a woman "standing in her grave clothes." The canon who wrote the book which contains this story lived in the fifteenth century; and it is quite clear, if he is to be taken as a specimen of the Polish clergy some of their beliefs must have been of a strange character.

CHAPTER XII.

HOME LIFE.

“ A few bright leaders of her host,
God’s glory and the Church’s boast,
She has set forth, and marked by name,
Fair in the lists of holy fame,
To cheer the many with the few,
And show what grace in man can do.
But as behind those stars most bright
Which meet us in the front of night,
Myriads on myriads have their place,
Far in the hidden realms of space,
Unseen by man, but to the eye
Of God as bright as those most nigh,
So in His Church, have ever been
Thousands whom none but He hath seen ;
Yet in His eye as bright and fair
As martyrs and apostles were.”

MONSELL.

CHAPTER XII.

HOME LIFE.

THE moral condition of society at large during the Middle Ages has been depicted, over and over again, in darkest colours. Notwithstanding, there are bright spots here and there. Not only were instances of purity and devotion frequent amongst those who lived in seclusion; they appear also in domestic life. At the same time, charges brought against the world outside the gates of monasteries and convents are sustained by the fact, that so many religious men and women sought those retreats because they were driven away from the common haunts of life by immoralities which abounded there. The better spirits were attracted by an apparent freedom from the temptations of "the world, the flesh, and the devil."

I gather illustrations for the present chapter from the ranks of both the noble and the lowly.

Henry I., surnamed the Fowler, became emperor of Germany in A.D. 918, and for twenty years enjoyed peace.

The story of his marriage does not appear in

history, but the following legend of it has been preserved, and I give it as I find it. I may say in passing that Henry I. was the son of Duke Otho, and succeeded to the ducal territories of his father in A.D. 912, before he was elected emperor.

Otho, and his wife Hathawic, being anxious to see their son married before they left the world, turned their thoughts to a fair maiden named Matilda, daughter of Count Thietric, a Dane, and his lady, the noble Reinbilda. She was being educated at the time in the convent of Herivord, in those accomplishments which were the fashion of the age ; and the fame of her virtues, and of the progress of her education, reached the castle of the duke and duchess. They selected her as a bride for their promising and hopeful son, but first proposed that he should visit the convent of Herivord, in order to see the beautiful maiden, and judge for himself. Off he started in company with Count Thietmar, who had superintended his education ; and, to give increasing importance and interest to the adventure, several youths trained in the chivalrous habits of the German nobility formed part of this extraordinary matrimonial embassy. They reached the neighbourhood of the convent, and, encamping outside the walls, waited for an opportunity of beholding the young lady whose hand the son of Duke Otho was prepared to solicit, should her appearance and her manners agree with the winsome

description he had received. The damsel, who, though not a nun, was a pupil of her grandmother, the lady abbess of the convent, had been allowed to attend public service in the neighbouring church, and there the visitors on this occasion had the privilege of seeing her with a Psalter in her hand, while engaged in her devotions. The young man was enamoured at once, and, impressed by her charms, resolved to seek an interview. He put on his princely attire, and, attended by his companions, approached the abbey gate, requesting to speak to the lady abbess. So distinguished a personage, and no doubt furnished with a proper introduction, obtained admittance without hesitation, and the object of the visit was in due time explained. The abbess at length called the maiden into the room, where she received Prince Henry; and his conversation with her served to deepen the impression already produced. She appeared with "all her chaste virginal modesty, and a serene, lovely countenance, in which were sweetly laid the colours of the lily and the rose." He declared at once the purpose of his visit, and the depth and fervour of his love, whereupon the abbess remarked, "It is not in our power to give her to any one, without the counsel and permission of her parents, of whose intentions we are ignorant. This only can we say, that on our part, by the will of God, there shall be no obstacle to your nuptials ;

for we have long heard of the excellency of your house, and this visit confirms what we have heard." Consent was soon obtained, and Henry led the fascinating Matilda to the altar, amidst the joyous congratulations of his family and friends. Marriages in noble families at that period were often arranged without consulting the parties most deeply concerned. This was a happy exception.

As the story goes, Henry and Matilda, as emperor and empress, lived in unity and love, and she often controlled her husband's temper, and softened his determinations by saying, "With what judgment ye judge ye shall be judged." His obligations to this excellent lady he acknowledged on his death-bed; and after his departure she exhorted their sons Otho and Henry to live in peace and love, repeating what the Gospel says: "That God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace unto the humble."

As a widow, she abounded in prayer and good works, rising at midnight, and going through the Psalter before cockcrow; relieving the poor, keeping up fires on winter nights along the highways for the guidance of travellers; and was universally benevolent—"not forgetting the singing birds, for whom she used to scatter crumbs under the trees in the name of their Creator." Matilda is reported to have been canonized, but I do not find her name in Butler's Lives.

Otho I., the next emperor, was son of Henry I., and he seems to have done credit to his father's and mother's training. He received the surname of the Great; and Milman speaks of him as a monarch more powerful than had appeared in Europe since the death of Charlemagne. The story of one of his marriages is romantic. After the death of his first wife, Editha, who, like his mother, Matilda, is reported as canonized, he fell in love with Adelaide, widow of King Lothair of Provence. That unfortunate princess, after her first husband's death, was cruelly persecuted by Berenger, whose son, Adalbert, desired to marry the beautiful lady. She was stripped of her jewels and costly raiment, was cruelly beaten, was cast into a filthy dungeon, and had her rich locks torn from her head. Such treatment of men and women by their conquerors, in spite of chivalry, was common enough. Adelaide made her escape by the help of a kind priest and a kind bishop. The Castle of Canosa, her place of refuge, was besieged by Berenger and Adalbert; but Otho, who had espoused her cause, came to her rescue, and married the captive. She was canonized for her piety—the third of the family, according to some writers, so distinguished.

There is an interesting account of a godly mother to be found in the writings of the Abbot Guibert de Nogent, born in a lordly castle A.D. 1053. It is

part of an autobiography, reminding us of Augustine's "Confessions," and may be taken as a true relation, only allowance must be made for the abbot's partiality, and for his "catholic" predilections. My extract is from "Mores Catholici; or, Ages of Faith."

"God of mercy and of sanctity, I render thanks to Thee for all Thy benefits. And first, I thank Thee for having given me a beautiful, chaste, and modest mother, who was infinitely filled with the fear of Thy name." "Thou knowest how Thou didst impress her with the fear of Thy name, which she found a remedy against all mental diseases; how she loved domestic retirement, and how careful she was not to condemn others who went much from home; and when, by strangers or servants, any fables of this kind were related, how she used to turn away, and endeavour by whispers to put a stop to them, being as much afflicted as if it were her own character that was called in question."

"In the eighth month after my birth, my father, according to the flesh, passed away. Although my mother was then in the brilliant lustre of her beauty, she resolved to remain a widow." Her mouth was so accustomed to recall, without ceasing, the name of her deceased husband, that it seemed as if her soul had never any other thought. "She often beheld him in visions, which, as they did not inspire her

with any security, but merely excited her solicitude, must no doubt have come from God, and from those angels who have care of the dead. She was universally venerated, and being much visited by noble men and women, on account of her amiable and gracious conversation, she used, when they went away, to have scruples lest she should have uttered any less true or idle word.

At length, on St. Gregory's Day, she sent me to school to learn grammar, from a man who could not, indeed, teach me what he did not know himself, but from one who was most careful to preserve me in virtue. For with whatever was modest, with whatever was chaste, with whatever was part of exterior elegance, he most faithfully and lovingly imbued me."

The records of humble life disclose to us characters not reckoned amongst mediæval saints—not like those who appear in legends I have given—but possessed of much simple piety. Stories of this kind are edifying. Here is one related by Gregory the Great. I take it as given in a translation from Neander, entitled "Light in the Dark Places."

"In the vault through which we enter the church of Clermont lived a certain Servulus, whom many among you know, as I know him, poor in earthly goods, rich in God, worn out by a long illness ;

for, from his childhood until the end of his life, he lay paralysed in all his limbs. Did I say he could not stand? He could not even raise himself so as to sit upright on his bed; he was never able to lift his hand to his mouth, nor even to turn from side to side. His mother and his brother were always with him to wait upon him, and what he received in alms he used to distribute to the poor. He could not read, but he had bought himself a Bible, and used to welcome all pious men, and make them read to him from this Bible. And thus, without reading, he was, nevertheless, able to become acquainted with the whole Bible. He sought, amidst his sufferings, constantly to thank God, and to spend day and night in praising Him. When he felt the approach of death, he begged his visitors to stand up with him, and to sing Psalms with him, in expectation of his approaching end. And, dying as he was, he sang with them, when suddenly he ceased, and cried aloud: 'Hush! hear you not how the praises of God resound in heaven?' And while he turned the ear of his spirit to catch these praises of God, his holy spirit departed from his body."

Coming down to a later date, the thirteenth century, we meet with one Ambrose of Siena, who belonged to a prosperous class of Italian citizens. The story is related by Neander in his "Church

History." On a Saturday night he used to place himself by one of the city gates and watch for poor travellers. He chose five out of a large number, and took them home, providing for them food and lodging. The next morning he led them to different churches, gave them a breakfast, and dismissed them with prayer. He visited prisons and hospitals, to reform or comfort the inmates, and attended much to the condition of the poor. There stood outside the city walls a Cistercian monastery, where he thought he would call, but, on the way, met with an old Dominican friar, who asked for alms on behalf of his convent, as members of the order were wont to do. They entered into conversation, when the old man addressed him thus: "Thou thinkest of gaining merit in the sight of God, and of better providing for thy soul's salvation, by shunning the society of thy relatives and associates, and declining to take any part in the celebration of a holy marriage. But I tell thee, thou wilt obtain more favour and merit in the sight of God, if thou disdainest not to mingle in society; for it is far more praiseworthy in His sight to battle with the temptations and dangers of the soul, than to lead the secure life which thou proposest to do."

When people heard this story, they thought the friar must have been Satan in disguise.

Another narrative given in Neander's "Church

History," and written by a contemporary respecting Raymund Palmaris in the twelfth century, belongs to the middle class of citizens at Piacenza, in Italy. When a boy he lost his father, and was seized with a desire to see the Holy Land. When he had visited the shrines he returned to his own country and married. God gave him five sons, and of each he said: "Here is a being who wears Thine image; to Thee I dedicate him as Thy creature; life and death are in Thy hand." He lost them all, but it was a joy to him that the Lord had called them "in the robe of innocence" to His own heavenly kingdom. Afterwards, he and his wife rejoiced over another child, whom the father, laying him down at the foot of a crucifix, consecrated, in his own mind, to a monastic life. He worked at his trade, and coupled with it the study of the Holy Scriptures. On Sundays and festivals he brought together in a workshop people of his own class, persuading them to abandon the foolish amusements of the age, and turn their thoughts to serious things. So acceptable were these services that multitudes flocked to hear him, and begged that he would preach in the streets and in the market-place; but that was quite out of the question to one who, like him, regarded priests as persons alone qualified to preach the Gospel. His wife died, and then, influenced by the prevalent passion for monastic life, he gave up his

property, made provision for his only living son, and started on a series of pilgrimages, resolving to end his days in a cloister. He visited the shrine of St. James of Compostella, in Spain, journeyed to Rome, and was on the point of setting forth for the Holy Jerusalem. But he had a dream, as, clothed in a pilgrim's garb, he lay in one of the porches of St. Peter's. He fancied that Christ appeared to him, and told him he was not pleased at his making a pilgrimage to the holy sepulchre. "Thou oughtest," said the Divine voice, "to employ thyself in things more acceptable to Me, and more profitable to thyself—works of mercy. Believe not that in the last day I shall inquire particularly concerning pilgrimages and such pious acts, when I shall say, 'I was hungry, and ye gave me meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink.' Thou oughtest no longer to roam about thus in the world. Go back to thy native town, Piacenza, where there are so many poor, so many forsaken widows, so many sick, who implore My compassion, and none to receive them. Go thither, and I will be with thee, and give thee grace, by which thou shalt be enabled to stir up the rich to benevolent action, to restore the contentious to peace, the wandering to the good way." Raymund rose from the marble pavement, and went, not towards Jerusalem, but towards home. In this dream we probably catch a reflection of his own

wise thoughts just before, about the employment of time in the service of our Lord.

He devoted himself to Christian work, and found the priests willing to forward his purpose, because they believed he had been divinely directed. He instituted a little hospital for the sick, and a refuge for the fallen; women, when reclaimed, he left to do what they thought right, whether to marry or to enter a convent. He looked after little children, carrying them in his arms, laying them in his bosom. He would lift up miserable objects he saw in the streets, and lay them on his shoulders, rejoicing like the Good Shepherd over lost ones.

They were troublous times, and Italian cities had more than a common share of trouble. Strife within and war without was the general condition. Piacenza was fighting with Cremona; armies went from the one to attack the other. Raymund undertook the office of peacemaker. He persuaded his fellow-citizens to desist from bloodshed, and threatened the people of Cremona with Divine judgment if they persevered in the strife. They were filled with resentment, and made the good man a prisoner. In his confinement they became better acquainted with his character, and at length sent him home, in their eyes, an angel or a saint. He died, not trusting in his own merit, but in the mercy of Christ. "In Thy arms, in Thy name, and in Thy

strength I depart from this world to my Saviour and Creator," were his last words.

To understand fully the condition of domestic life in those days, we must take into account prevalent ideas touching matrimony. Though in theory it was acknowledged to be "an honourable estate," and though marriage was one of the seven sacraments, yet celibacy was counted of superior virtue and holiness; and many who were pure and happy in their love as man and wife, aspired after the supposed loftier estate, as nearer the gate of Heaven, where they "neither marry, nor are given in marriage." Hence some who had been united by holy rites lived together as brother and sister, or, after a time, separated to live as monk and nun. This could not be otherwise than a disturbing element in the "domestic constitution"; and must have extinguished some beautiful lights such as shine in English homes. It is remarkable that few saintly legends turn on the point of connubial affection, though so many ballads celebrate the romantic lives of bold knights and ladies fair. Yet crosses in abundance testify to the affection of husbands for their wives, and numerous monuments point to happy marriages; for instance, in the case of Mary of Burgundy. "Four years and nine months did she live with her husband, graciously and in great love." A romantic legend tells of a

widow entering the sepulchre of her departed loved one, and, folding him in a last embrace; "with a kiss she died." Better still, another legend relates, that when a knight was expected home from the holy wars, her attendants feared to announce his arrival, lest the joy should rob her of her life.

CHAPTER XIII.

ANSELM.

“ Our heart is like a mill, ever grinding, which a certain lord gave charge to his servant, enjoining that he should only grind in it his master’s grain, whether wheat, barley, or oats, and telling him that he must subsist on the produce. But that servant has an enemy who is always playing tricks on the mill. If any moment he finds it unwatched, he throws in gravel to keep the stones from acting, or pitch to clog them, or dirt and chaff to mix with the meal. If the servant is careful in tending his mill, there flows forth a beautiful flour, which is at once a service to his master and a subsistence to himself; but if he plays the truant, and allows his enemy to tamper with the machinery, the bad outcome tells the tale, his lord is angry, and he himself is starved.”—ANSELM.

CHAPTER XIII.

ANSELM.

YOUNG people know something of Anselm, Archbishop of Canterbury, from what is said about him in the History of England. He makes a striking figure in the reigns of William Rufus and Henry I. He opposed them both, denouncing the violence of the one, and refusing to do homage to the other. He gained and lost the confidence of his sovereigns; twice the revenues of his archbishopric were confiscated, and twice he returned from exile with honour. All this was more or less political; but Anselm played a more important part as author of works on Christian divinity. He exerted a permanent influence on religious opinion, and did much to shape the doctrine of our Lord's Atonement in what may be called the evangelical form. Neither as politician nor theologian does he come before us on these pages. I introduce him for the purpose of exhibiting sides of his character which have to do with personal life. Some of them are historical, others legendary, all of them picturesque.

He was an Italian by birth, and lived with his good mother, Ermemberga, in the city of Aosta, at the foot of the Alps. From a child he must have been familiar with the magnificent scenery of the neighbourhood; and when he went out from his chamber in the morning, he would lift up his eyes to the Alps, which rose in amazing grandeur above his earliest home. He had been told that God dwelt on high, and in his childish dreams he imagined Him seated on the highest summit of those glorious hills as on a "great white throne." He climbed in fancy to the snowy top, to find himself there in the palace of the great King. To his childish eyes, the Lord of all dwelt in royal state amidst domes and pinnacles of rock and ice; and when, as the sun went down, and touched the heights with flushes of crimson, his soul was filled with admiration and delight. One day he fancied himself taken up to see the Divine household, and to sit down at the Divine footstool. He was asked who he was, and whence he came, and answered as a little boy was like to do. A servant was told by the Lord to give Anselm some bread of exceeding whiteness, bread such as angels ate, and it proved sweeter than honey or the honeycomb. A day after this he told his mother that he had been fed in heaven by the bread of God; and whatever we may think of the story, we must acknowledge that, after the boy became a man, he ate

daily, as all true believers do, of the bread of life which came down from Heaven. Ermemberga was pleased with the boy's dream ; not so her husband, who was a morose and worldly man.

Anselm's mother died, and his father was more unkind afterwards than he had been before. The youth started from home on foot with a servant, and, in crossing Mont Cenis, was overpowered with fatigue. To refresh himself he took a handful of snow, and put it to his mouth. But the servant gave him some pure white bread, which he carried in his wallet, and this the lad connected with his memorable dream, and thought it typical of the white bread which he had seen and eaten in God's home on the mountain top.

He wandered away to Bec, in Normandy, where Lanfranc was abbot. Lanfranc, whom he afterwards succeeded as Archbishop of Canterbury, was a great advocate for obedience, and won renown by giving a false quantity to a Latin word, simply because his ignorant master had told him to do so. Anselm glorified obedience as much as Lanfranc did, and his biographer says, that had he been told to go out and live in the wildest wood, he would have done so. Obedience was the rule, and to disobey entailed penalties. A monk was laid in a grave alive, and told patiently to remain there, whilst the brethren shovelled the earth over him. But the self-willed

man, instead of lying still, stood up erect, and looked defiantly on the cowed gravediggers, until his obstinacy gave way, and he was reduced to abject submission.

Anselm became prior of Bec, and there he received gracious manifestations from above. As he lay awake one night, the walls of his cell appeared transparent, and he could look through them. He saw the monks walking in the aisles, and surrounding the altar, and preparing for matins, and lighting the lamps. Then came the tolling of the bell, and soon the brethren were on their knees. All this seemed reality—indeed a miracle. It was a dream. He interpreted it as illustrating the Divine method of prophecy. Prophecy was foresight, enabling men to foretell what should happen. He compared the vision of things at a distance, through obstacles in space, to vision penetrating forwards towards objects remote in time.

When Anselm came to Canterbury and rested in the cathedral close, he met with Eadmer, a monk who wrote his life. Eadmer gossips about Anselm's visits, and tells us how he passed the day—sometimes in the cloisters, and sometimes in the Chapter House; and he lets us into the secret of differences between him and Lanfranc, as to Saxons and Normans. Lanfranc was thoroughly Norman, and made the Saxon white horse a back to carry Norman burdens,

and to work in Norman mills. He had little or no respect for Saxons; not even for Saxon saints. It was otherwise with Anselm.

When Lanfranc was dead, Anselm was unwilling to succeed him. At length he was forced into office. He closed his fist against the archiepiscopal staff, and the bishops had to wrench his fingers open, till he cried with pain. Forcing the staff into his hand, they shouted, "Long live the bishop!" and then joined in a joyful *Te Deum*. "What you are doing," he exclaimed, "is useless, useless." People round him thought he would go mad, and they had to sprinkle him with holy water. In his refusal of the honour he went beyond Ambrose.

Bishops and archbishops in the Middle Ages often went out to hunt. Anselm did so. On one occasion a hare was driven under the legs of his horse. The hounds stood at bay. The hunters laughed. "It puts me in mind," said the good man, "of a poor sinner departing from life, and devils after him longing for their prey." The narrator saw something wonderful in the hare's escape; the turn Anselm gave to the little incident shows something of his habit of mind. He often spiritualized what he saw, and in common incidents read religious parables.

During the last six months of his life he was exceedingly feeble. He had to be carried in a chair when he entered the church, and was so thin that

it seemed as if a gust of wind would blow him away. On Palm Sunday the monks said, "As far as we are able to see, you will leave this world for the court of the heavenly King before Easter." He replied, "If such be His will I obey; but if it had pleased Him to leave me longer among you, at least until I had resolved the question about the origin of the soul, I should have accepted it gratefully, as I do not know any one who will answer it when I am gone." The ruling passion was strong in death. A brother read the Gospel for the day, which says, "Ye are they who have remained with Me in my temptation; and I appoint unto you a kingdom, as My Father hath appointed Me, that ye should eat and drink at My table." He began to breathe slowly, and, according to a superstitious custom, was laid on the floor, and there sprinkled with ashes. He died in A.D. 1109.

Another great thinker to be coupled with Anselm appeared in the following century,—Thomas Aquinas,—in whose life there is little of the legendary element. It is related, however, that, after resisting temptations, which were laid in wait for him by his wicked brothers, two angels came and girded him about the waist, so as to make him cry with joy. Did this mean that a heavenly power girded his loins with a rapturous determination to persevere in his divinely-chosen course?

There is a picture in the Caraffa Chapel of the Church of Sopra Minerva at Rome, which represents Aquinas kneeling before a crucifix, whilst from the mouth of the Saviour proceed the words, "Bene scripsisti de Me, Thomas; quam mercedem accipies?" He replied, "Non aliam nisi Te." "Thou hast written well of Me; what reward wilt thou take?" "Nothing, except Thyself." This embodies an oft-repeated legend, that so the Saviour spoke to Thomas, and so Thomas replied to Him.

He does not relate this himself, but the sentiment is worthy of him. Whatever becomes of the legend, the idea makes a beautiful and devout impression upon every Christian heart. As we think of it we see how the story harmonises with his dying words, borrowed from Augustine: "Then shall I truly live, when I shall be quite filled with Thee alone and Thy love; now I am a burden to myself because I am not entirely full of Thee." Did the legend grow out of this death-bed saying?

The friars begged he would write a book on Solomon's Song, which divines in those days regarded as illustrative of the love of Christ for His Bride, the Church. He answered, "Give me St. Bernard's spirit, and I will obey." But though he attempted the task, he did not live to finish it.

He died, some say in the forty-eighth, others in the

fiftieth year of his age. This led him to exclaim, as he approached the hour of his departure, "I have begged of God, as the greatest favour, to die a religious man. I now thank Him for it. It is a greater benefit than has been granted to many of His servants, that He calls me out of the world so early to enter into His joy."

Butler says, the fruits of his preaching were no less wonderful than those of his pen. One Good Friday the whole congregation melted into tears, and he was obliged to stop several times that they might recover themselves. On Easter Day his discourse on the glory of Christ and the resurrection of believers in Him was no less pathetic and affecting. After the sermon, as he was leaving the church, a poor woman was healed by touching the hem of his garment. Strangely enough the writer adds: "The conversion of two considerable Rabbis seemed still a greater miracle." He held a long conference with them. It was to be renewed the next day, but after he had spent a night in prayer they returned, not to dispute, but to embrace the faith, and were followed by many others.

CHAPTER XIV.

ST. BRUNO AND ST. BERNARD.

“ The Carthusians — an order founded by St. Bruno—were enjoined to study and to labour with their hands, their labour consisting in cultivating their fields and gardens, and in transcribing books, by which, in the commencement of the institution, they supported and enriched their community. The libraries in the Carthusian convents have always been filled with books. When the Count de Nevers, who had been edified by their sanctity, sent them plate for their church, they sent it back as useless to them. He then sent them a quantity of parchment and leather for their books, which they accepted with gratitude.”

MRS. JAMESON.

Of St. Bernard, Archbishop Trench says, “ There have been other men, Augustine and Luther, for instance, who, by their words and writings, have ploughed deeper and more lasting furrows in the great field of the Church ; but probably no man during his lifetime ever exercised a *personal* influence in Christendom equal to his ; who was the stayer of popular commotions, the queller of heresies, the umpire between princes and kings, the counsellor of popes, the founder (for so he may be esteemed) of an important religious order, and the author of a crusade.”

CHAPTER XIV.

ST. BRUNO AND ST. BERNARD.

ONE bright morning in July I started from Grenoble for the monastery of La Grande Chartreuse. The journey for some distance was by the Lyons railway, through the vale of Grésivaudan, by the banks of the Isère. Formerly the monastery was difficult of access, but now it is easily reached by carriage from the railway station at Voiron. The ascent, as far as Laurent du Pont, is up a road lined by acacias, and bordered by barley fields; and it commands views of a superb valley, with bosky dells cut in twain by the river just mentioned. Village succeeds village, the gorge becomes increasingly grand, and purple rocks rise out of the green woods. From Laurent the road is much steeper, winding along mountain ledges, as the stream fights its way through formidable obstacles at every turn. Passing across a thick forest, you at last reach the convent gates, 4,268 feet above the level of the sea.

In the days of William the Conqueror there lived

first at Cologne, and then at Rheims, a man named Bruno, of strong character, of determined will, and of eminent piety, according to the notions of his age. His conversion was effected in an extraordinary manner whilst a student in Paris, where he had for his instructor one Raymond, Canon of Nôtre Dame, and professor in the university. When Raymond died, being greatly venerated for his apparent sanctity, he "was carried to the grave attended by a great concourse of the people; and as they were chanting the Service for the Dead, just as they came to the words, 'Responde mihi quantas habes iniquitates,' the dead man half raised himself from his bier, and cried, with a lamentable voice, 'By the justice of God, I am accused!' thereupon the priests laid down the bier, and put off the interment till the following day. Next day they again formed in procession, and as they chanted the same words, 'responde mihi,' the dead man again rose up, and cried out with a more dreadful voice, 'By the justice of God, I am judged!' and then sank down on his bier as before. Great was the consternation of the people, and they put off the conclusion of the obsequies till the third day; when, just as they had begun to chant the same verse, trembling for the result, the dead man again rose up, crying with a terrible voice and look, 'By the justice of God, I am condemned!' Upon this, priests and attendants,

half dead with fear and horror, flung the body out into a field as unworthy of Christian burial."

This terrific wonder, the legend informs us, made such an impression on the mind of Bruno, that, seeing the awfulness of a life spent in pretended, not real piety, he applied himself with earnestness to the true service of God and the Church. A monastic vocation appeared the highest form of religion, and he, therefore, became a monk, resolving to commence a more severe order than obtained in the degenerate institutions of the day.

It was necessary to obtain the sanction of the Bishop of Grenoble, and St. Hugh at that time occupied the See. St. Hugh was much troubled about the origin of evil, and believed that his difficulties on the subject were suggested by a demon, but they did not overthrow the strength of his faith in the Gospel. He was a timid man, and when consulted by Bruno, put before him the forbidding nature of the site on which he proposed to found his monastery.

"You will find yourselves," he said, "entering a region which may truly be called one of horrors, the haunt of wild beasts, the clime of protracted and most bitter cold, rocks of vast altitude, and melancholy forests of impenetrable depth. Not a single species of fruit ever grows there; the earth exhibits not one solitary spontaneous production for the sus-

tenance of man. The roar of torrents resounds in its vicinity, but the silence of those forlorn wastes is perpetual, and every object that meets the eye there is hideous and terrifying,—everything, in fact, tells of withering desolation and death.”

Nothing daunted, Bruno and his companions, six in number, climbed up the mountains, and on John the Baptist's Day, A.D. 1084, began to build small cells, where they formed a society, on the strictest conventual rules, of which severe abstinence, complete seclusion, regular devotion, and almost perpetual silence, were leading characteristics. The little band took the name of Carthusian, which is the Latin rendering of the word *Chartreux*, derived, some say, from *chartre*, a prison.

Bruno's huts and chapel are reported to have been on an isolated mass of rock, near the present building. It is quite certain that from a small beginning the institute soon attained immense dimensions, devotees coming on every side to join the brotherhood. Bruno was early called away by the reigning pontiff to visit Rome, where he was detained, until allowed to carry out a plan for founding in Calabria a second convent like the first in the wilds of Dauphiné. He died in A.D. 1101.

There is a most magnificent statue of St. Bruno in the church of St. Maria degli Angeli, formed out of the baths of Diocletian at Rome.

On the walls of the Grande Chartreuse there hung, when I was there, a series of twenty-two pictures, copied from originals now in the gallery of the Louvre. They represent the legendary history of St. Bruno. There appears the unhappy Raymond giving lectures to his pupils ; next he is seen on his death-bed, whilst a priest presents a crucifix, and a demon stands by his pillow waiting to seize the departing soul. The fearful resurrection of the dying man comes next. Then follows St. Bruno's story. He is represented kneeling before a crucifix, teaching at Rheims, and commencing a monastic life. In connection with this last incident Hugh is depicted beholding in a dream seven stars moving towards the site of the new monastery. Then the bishop again appears, investing Bruno with the habit of his order. Amongst other pictures relating to Pope Urban's patronage of the saint, are two in reference to Roger, Count of Sicily, who approaches Bruno's cell to beg a blessing, and who also beholds Bruno in a vision, warning him against the treachery of an officer in his service. Bruno had great fear of female enchantments, and an interdict of Guignes, fifth general of the Carthusians, reveals the founder's sentiments in no softened form. "We never permit women to enter our walls, for we know that neither sage, nor prophet, nor judge, nor he in whose heart God Himself dwelleth ; no, nor the first model of our race, that

issued from His hands, has succeeded in evading with safety the endearments and guile of womankind. Let us call to mind Solomon, David, Samson, Lot, and those who had taken to themselves the women of their choice, even Adam himself, and, let us rest assured, man cannot conceal fire in his bosom without scorching his garments, nor walk upon hot coals without burning the soles of his feet."

To the credit of the Carthusians, be it said, they have never degenerated like some other orders, having been throughout their history singularly free from charges of immorality. Fleury says this order has never stood in need of reform; and Voltaire acknowledges that they have been perfectly quiet in a tumultuous world, its noise scarcely ever reaching their ears; and that they have known kings reigning over them only through the prayers they have offered on their behalf.

The Carthusians have ever been celebrated for abstinence, and for their refusal of meat on fast days; but there is an absurd legend that on one of those occasions when they were exceedingly hungry and could obtain no fish, fowls were brought on the table for their refreshment, contrary to the rules of the order. St. Hugh turned them into small land tortoises, which were regarded as food not coming under the denomination of flesh.

As I followed, in the Grande Chartreuse, the monk

who acted as guide through the extensive building, I saw what might be taken as a background to many a legend related in old chronicles. We passed along a cloister with vaulted roof, small windows on one side, and doors of officials on the other, the latter having passages of Scripture written over them: "Narrow is the way which leadeth unto life"; "Whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath cannot be My disciple"; "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity." Nowhere did the eye rest on the glad tidings of great joy which is unto all people. Recognitions of pardon and peace through Jesus Christ were absent. Stations of the cross, however, were hanging on the walls, and through a window could be caught glimpses of a bright flower-garden, cheery and pleasant amidst prevailing sombreness.

A cupboard-like bed, a little reading desk, a stove, directions for novices, a statuette of the Madonna, and a crucifix—these were the furniture of the cells. Passing from a small chapel, having crossbones in the altar cloth, we came upon a small burial-ground with a cross in the middle.

The monastery of Chartreuse has not been suppressed, though the revenues have been reduced; but a much more serious tribulation befell the brethren of the London Charter House in the reign of Henry VIII. The prior and eleven of the members were hanged, drawn, and quartered, because they would not

acknowledge the royal ecclesiastical supremacy. Ten were flung into prison, where they all died, except one, who perished afterwards on the gallows. These horrors are painted on the cloister walls of the richly ornamented Cartuja convent at Granada, and one would be glad to believe that they set forth only fictitious legends ; but, alas ! the story of the London Carthusian monks is too true.

Eleven years before the death of St. Bruno the great St. Bernard was born, whose life ran on a similar monastic line, but whose personal influence and fame far outrivalled his contemporary. After all, the legends of Bruno are chiefly interesting from his connection with La Grande Chartreuse, but those of Bernard derive their importance from his personality and from great contemporary events.

Near Dijon, the capital of Burgundy, is a little village, with an old castle in it, more beautiful once than it is now. At the end of the eleventh century there lived in it a knight and his lady ; his name was Tecelin, and hers was Aletta. Tecelin liked to wear a coat of mail, and, spear in hand, to go forth on his war horse, to fight a battle with other knights, but Aletta loved to keep at home and nurse and teach her seven children. One of them was Bernard, whom she valued, perhaps, more than the rest, for she dreamt of him as intended by God to be a great man in the Church of Christ.

The child himself, one Christmas night, had a dream, in which he saw the infant Jesus, who looked so lovely, that his heart was filled with affection for Him, and he used, in the sweetest way, to talk about the Holy Babe. His mother yearned over him as Hannah did over Samuel; and Aletta said, as she folded this treasure in her arms, "I will lend him to the Lord as long as he liveth."

In those days the world was full of wickedness, even beyond what it is now, and the good lady shuddered at the thought of sending her Bernard into such a world to be polluted by the vices and crimes which abounded everywhere. The common belief was, that a monastery afforded the best protection, so Aletta wished to see the lad become a monk. But she did not live to have her wish fulfilled. On the festival of St. Ambrose, in A.D. 1110,—which she kept in the castle with the priests of Dijon,—fever seized the fond mother, and she died, signing herself with the sign of the cross.

Bernard mixed with the world awhile, and then thought of his mother's prayers and vows. He heard a sermon from the words, "Being confident of this very thing, that He who hath begun a good work in you will perform it unto the day of Jesus Christ"; and this he took to be a voice from Heaven, confirming his purpose to enter a monastery. He persuaded others to join him, and they spent six months at a

retired house at Châtillon sur Seine, in Burgundy, to prepare for their future life. All his brothers, except Nivard, the youngest, joined him in his resolve, and then Guy, the eldest, said, "Good-bye, Nivard, now you will have all our estates and lands to yourself." "What!" cried the lad; "you take heaven and leave me earth. That is unequal; I will go with you." So they all went to the abbey of Citeaux, and, prostrating themselves at the gate, asked to be admitted. Bernard wished what was impossible, to leave his body outside, and to enter only as a spirit; and so strangely did he strive to accomplish this that he overcame the power of his senses, and shut his eyes to every-day sights. After having spent a year in his cell he did not know whether the top of it had a ceiling, and whether the wall had three windows or one. The monks said he spent five-and-twenty days at the foot of the chapel altar.

As further proof of deadness to outer things, we learn that, after a whole day's walk or ride on the shores of the beautiful lake of Geneva, when he heard his companions speak of the prospect, he declared he had seen nothing of it; he did not know there was a lake in the neighbourhood!

Bernard entered the priestly order, and used to ask, "Is it fitting that shepherds, like the sheep should follow sensual appetites, and feed on earthly

pastures? No! instead of grovelling on the ground, they should stand erect, and look heavenwards."

He worked hard in the fields, and studied Scripture amongst the woods, with none but beeches and oaks for his teachers. People came from all quarters when they heard of his fame, and flocked in such numbers, that the brotherhood of Citeaux had to build two new cloisters. The abbot at length sent out Bernard to found a new abbey. Forth he went with a crosier in his hand, followed by twelve monks. They walked in procession, and sang hymns by the way, till they reached a dreary spot called the Valley of Wormwood; for that plant grew there in abundance. The brethren grubbed up roots and built little cells, in which they lived on barley and vetches, with boiled beech leaves instead of herbs. Bernard preached and prayed, and had visions from Heaven. He and the monks toiled in building and in husbandry, and soon the Valley of Wormwood was changed into a Garden of Eden. The situation was open, and caught the sunshine all day long, where the valley spread out into a plain, watered by the river Aube. The monks called their new home Clairvaux (*Clara Valles*), the bright valley.

From this parent stock slips were taken and planted in divers places. Bernard, it is said, cured diseases by making the sign of a cross, and gave

assurance beforehand of wonderful recoveries from sickness. He revealed what was going on in the invisible world ; and, most marvellous of all, delivered the monastery from a swarm of flies by a sentence of excommunication, which struck them dead. Flies, now, do not care for excommunication.

Other wonderful things are told. Once he fell into a trance, and saw Satan accusing him before the throne of God. Bernard overcame ; and is represented in art with a demon fettered behind him. He answered the accuser, saying, " I confess myself most unworthy of the glory of heaven, and that I can never obtain it by my own merits. But my Lord possesses it by a double title—that of natural inheritance, being the only begotten of the Father ; and that of purchase, He having bought it by His precious blood. The second title He has conferred on me, and, upon this right, I hope with an assured confidence to obtain it through His adorable passion and mercy." The Virgin Mary, whom Bernard honoured above all created beings, is painted as appearing to him in a rocky desert, as he writes at a desk made out of old roots. In another instance he is seated amongst his books, with jars of lilies on the table, when he is surprised by a gracious visit from the glorified lady. He was esteemed the last of the fathers ; and amidst his teachings this ought to be noticed, that he insisted, above everything,

upon spiritual and practical religion. "It is far better," he said, "to devote your whole life in humility and poverty in the service of God, than, in pride and arrogance, to undertake a journey to Jerusalem. If there be any benefit in visiting the place where the feet of the Lord have been, it is of still greater benefit to tread in the way of salvation, so that at last you may see Him face to face."

Though Bernard spent much time as a recluse, he had, unlike Bruno, largely to do with the outward world. He rebuked Louis VI., King of France, in a way that made many people wonder. "Your obstinacy," he told His Majesty, "will be punished by the death of your eldest son Philip, for last night, in a dream, I saw you, with your younger son Louis, fall at the feet of the bishops, whom you yesterday set at nought, and thence I infer that the death of your firstborn is at hand, and will compel you to implore the favour of that Church which you now oppress, to allow you to set your Louis in his place." Not long afterwards, as Prince Philip rode through Paris, he fell from his horse and was killed, because a great hog ran along the road and frightened the animal. It is curious that, to prevent the repetition of such an accident, pigs were not allowed to run about the streets,—except such pigs as belonged to the monks of St. Antony,—and

that only on condition of their wearing a bell round their necks.

Count William, a blustering knight, drove from their sees bishops who had reproved him for misconduct and when nobody else could control him, Bernard rebuked the offender with terrible indignation. People, looking on, thought the priest would rue for it, but the bold baron trembled in every limb, and showed submission by giving to a bishop whom he had insulted, the kiss of reconciliation and peace.

The days in which Bernard lived were days of strife. People of all sorts were opposed to each other; priests quarrelled with priests, bishops with bishops, and popes with popes. There were rival popes, two or three at a time. Pope Innocent and Pope Anacletus, in the first half of the twelfth century, fought with each other for the spiritual throne, each saying that he did so only in obedience to the will of God. Bernard took Innocent's part, and when Innocent rode into the city of Rheims, the emperor leading the pope's horse, Bernard attended on him. At a council of churchmen he made a speech about the sins of the clergy, and boldly condemned them to their face. He wished to make peace between contending factions, also to lessen the worldliness of worship by turning many silver and gold ornaments out of Milan cathedral. The

citizens followed the reformer, and plucked hairs from the edge of his mantle as precious relics. They wanted to have him as their archbishop, but he would not hear of it. When he went back to France the Alpine shepherds met him on the road, and knelt to receive his blessing.

The greatest of all the wars in those troublous times were the crusades carried on against the Saracens, who had the Holy Land under their sway. Jerusalem and our Lord's sepulchre were in their hands, and they cruelly treated Christians who went there on pilgrimage. It was strangely supposed that it would please the Saviour, not to convert the Saracens, but at the point of the sword to drive them from the place where He had lived and died.

Bernard wrote, travelled, and preached in support of the second Crusade, and, as the legends say, wrought many a miracle on its behalf. At Vezelay he delivered a wonderful sermon. Multitudes gathered to hear him, so that the castle where he was staying could not hold them, and, on a wooden platform in the open air, he spoke to a host of listeners in words which came to them like lightning and thunder. He wore the white habit of his order—a long, loose robe with wide sleeves, and a hood falling in folds over his shoulders. His head was shaved, and he had little beard, and on his

dress he showed a red cross, which was the Crusaders' symbol. He held badges of the cross in his hands, and gave them freely to the crowd. When all he had brought were gone, he tore his dress in pieces to meet the desires of excited people, who cried out at the top of their voices, "The cross, the cross!" At Spires, Bernard took a consecrated banner from the altar, and delivered it into royal hands, whilst people wondered and wept; thieves and robbers, who ignorantly thought they were doing God service, crowded round the sacred flag, and made a vow to follow it.

One fair legend lingers among others of a different kind. A mad zealot roused the wrath of the Crusaders against the poor Jews. Massacres stained Cologne, Mentz, Worms, and other cities with streams of blood. Bernard stood up between the dead and the living, and, with difficulty, this plague was stayed. "God," he said, "had punished the Jews by their dispersion; let not men increase it by murder." Bernard died in A.D. 1153. "Pray to the Saviour," he said, "Who willeth not the death of a sinner, that He delay not my departure, and yet that He will be pleased to guard it; support him who hath no merits of his own by your prayers, that the adversary of our salvation may not find any place open to his attacks."

There is more of veritable history than of fictitious

legend in Bernard's life. Indeed, there is little of the latter, beyond celestial visions so richly glorified by artists, especially Murillo. He depicts the saint as nourished by the Madonna, who caused a flow of milk from her bosom to refresh the lips of her admiring and beloved votary. Two facts, having all the grace of poetry, are pictorially recorded in connection with the abbot's story: one by a contemporary, who describes princes, warriors, and delicate women, under the inspiration of such teaching as Bernard's, bending their necks to the yoke, that they might draw over hill and dale, and through streams of water, loads of stone, and stores of wheat, and oil, and wine for the service of God's sanctuary. The other fact is the death of the abbot's brother, related by him in a sermon to the monks, on the words, "As the tents of Kedar, as the curtains of Solomon," in which the preacher paints, with affecting eloquence, the departure of his brother's holy soul out of a "black tent" on earth, to a bright temple in the heavens.

The fame of the great Clairvaux abbot has thrown into the shade his namesake of Clugny, author of the favourite hymn, "Jerusalem, my happy home," also another monastic worthy bearing the same name. He was born at Menthon, on the charming Lake of Annecy. When I was exploring the neighbourhood a few years ago, a servant at the castle, which was

the birthplace of this third Bernard, showed me a window whence the latter escaped from a matrimonial engagement to which his parents had pledged him when very young. "There," said the guide, pointing to a rock at the bottom of the castle wall, "are the prints of the saint's feet where he fell." Tradition adds, that he left behind him a note explaining the cause of his elopement. He fled to Aosta, at the foot of the Pennine and Graian Alps, and, on the summit of the pass, founded the convent so famous for its hospitality, and for the rescue of travellers from snow-drifts near its friendly gates. When this St. Bernard had ruled there some time, two strangers came who said they were searching after a lost son. They told how he had been betrothed, and had left them on the eve of his appointed bridal, without any clue to his retreat. The monk, at first, only comforted them with hopes of their finding the son they had lost; but at length he entered their chamber, and throwing his arms round them, exclaimed, "I am your son Bernard."

CHAPTER XV.

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI.

“My heart is Thine, its powers then fill,
Consume whate'er resists Thy will,
Conquer, subdue, Thy power display,
Let each affection own Thy sway—
As iron bar bright flame imbibes,
And glowing shines with fire it hides,
Or solar rays, which pierce our sight,
Dark air oft brighten into light,
So may Thy beams each film remove,
And fill my soul with perfect love.”

*Translated from the original Italian written
by Francis of Assisi.*

CHAPTER XV.

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI.

BETWEEN Perugia, rich in architecture and painting, and Foligno, poor and uninteresting in these respects, there spreads out a vast plain which is a field of plenty—in spring bright with hyacinths, in summer laden with corn, in autumn purple with grapes. On a rocky hill to the east stands the town of Assisi, up which, along a steep street, one reaches a magnificent abbey, dedicated to St. Francis, who is buried there. No name gathers round it a richer array of legends. They cover a history of undoubted facts, and illustrate a character such as the world has rarely seen. Far beyond Bruno—perhaps as a personality even beyond Bernard—Francis of Assisi stands out in legendary literature.

He was born in A.D. 1182, a son of Petro Bernardine, and Madonna Pica, his wife. Being well instructed as a boy in the French language for purposes of trade, he got the name of Francesco, or Francis, and by that name he is known in history.

In the upper part of the town, and joined to a church still called new, though very old, are remains of a house in which he lived with his father and mother. A dark cell-like chamber is shown where he slept, and where his father cruelly whipped and in other ways ill-treated him, because, after being fond of youthful pleasures, he took a turn—giving away his clothes to the poor, and spending his time in prayer and fasting. His father being angry on account of something he had done, Francis stripped himself for ever of all fashionable raiment which his parents wished him to wear ; and, dressed only in a hair shirt, he said thenceforth he would have no other father than a Father in heaven. He accepted a life of complete poverty, making her, as he said, his bride. He looked on poverty as having been the spouse of Christ. The Lord's bride,—who had been cast off afterwards by a proud and worldly Church—he chose as his bosom companion. As Dante says :—

“ Still young, he for his lady's love forswore
His father : for a bride whom none approves,
But rather as on death would close the door :
In sight of all the heavenly court, that moves
Around the eternal Father, they were wed,
And more, from day to day, increased their loves.”

St. Francis married poverty for the Lord's sake. That strange state of wedlock is painted on the walls of the church on the hill by one worthy to execute the task, the famous Giotto.

At the foot there is another church, called St. Mary of the Angels. It covers a small cell in the middle of a large nave, and goes by the name of Porziuncula. Beautiful outside, within it is bare and dark, lighted only by small lamps. That cell is the original structure which St. Francis built, after he had wedded himself to his chosen bride. Here he began a singular course, which ended in the establishment of an order called by his name. The old monks had lost their early simplicity, and had become rich and worldly. St. Francis tried to bring back to its reality the original idea, which had led people to seek after purity, virtue, and the practice of almsgiving. He called around him brothers of his own mind, for whom he drew up a number of rules; he made it a law that they should wear a humble dress, which would place them on a level with the shepherds and peasants in the neighbourhood of Assisi. His mission was not to the rich, but to the poor; not amidst palaces, but amongst highways and hedges. He sent out his followers clothed in a long brown garment with a rope round their waists, and they were ordered, like the seventy, to take neither gold nor silver, nor money in their purse, nor shoes nor staff, but in poverty, and depending on God's providence, to seek the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

In the "History of Italian Art" by Crowe and Cavalcaselle it is remarked :—

“Poverty, wedded to Christ, and widowed in Golgotha, was the spouse which St. Francis chose—a spouse whose rags and sufferings, as she pursued the thorny path of life, were still not without charm. For poverty, though her way is amongst briars, enjoys the bloom of roses. She may be stoned by the heedless, feared and despised by the worldly, but she is the foe of avarice and lust, the friend of charity; and hope whispers to her that she may inherit eternal happiness. He who gives his all to the poor is himself a beggar, but the consciousness of good is as the rose on the briar, and the reward is a seat amongst the angels.”

It was a great thing to get Pope Innocent III. on the side of the new order, and, after much reluctance, being moved by dreams attributed to Divine inspiration, he gave his consent to the institution. He saw a palm tree springing up at his feet, which grew to a great height. Presently after he saw Francis, the friar, propping up a church,—the Lateran—as it seemed about to fall. These visions he interpreted as meaning that the new order would be a success, that it would flourish like a palm, and strike out its roots like Lebanon; moreover, that as the Church then was beginning to totter, this lowly brother, who had taken poverty as his portion, was ordained to support the edifice. The pope sent for Francis, and gave him authority to proceed in his mission. This was in the year A.D. 1210.

Accordingly he returned to Assisi, and at the foot of the hill lived in a mean cottage, until the ground on which he built the Porziuncula was given to him. He would not have it without paying rent, but the rent was only a basket of fish, which could easily be caught in the neighbouring river.

His intention was that churches of his order should be, not grand and costly, built of stone, and adorned with pictures, but small and low, constructed with wood, and naked of ornament; everything was to be in keeping with his bride. He would be faithful to her, and make his bed upon the hard ground, with a stone for his pillow. He rarely ate anything cooked, and lived chiefly on coarse bread, and water sprinkled with ashes. He mortified his body, calling it brother ass—an animal meant not to be pampered, but to be harnessed, and used for carrying burdens. It deserved, he said, only coarse food, and it ought often to be beaten, that it might be kept in order. He worked hard himself, and required others to do the same, calling an idle friar “Brother Fly,” because he did no good, but only buzzed about, and troubled everybody.

St. Francis was not what we should call eloquent;—like Moses, a great ruler, he had not the gift of speech; but he made an impression by his preaching, no doubt because of its simplicity, its sincerity, and its earnestness. The man came out in his

sermons. They were not masks over his face; people saw through them what he really was. When he preached before the pope and cardinals at Rome, he told them that God had given him the gift of prayer, but not of words. He was willing to be quite silent, and only to live and work. He sought a sign as to what he should do. An answer came from those who loved him, "Go, preach the Gospel to every creature." When he preached, such power was given him from above, that none could resist what he said, and the most learned remained silent and astonished in his presence. He liked short sermons, saying, "As we are heard above, so we are heard below; not for our 'much speaking.'"

But he had other hearers not commonly addressed. He gave a very broad application to the words, "Preach the Gospel to every *creature*." As he walked over the hills and plains of Umbria in the early morn, or when the sun went down at eventide, he looked up into the sky, and saw flocks of birds flying with wonderful joy, and to them he preached, saying, "Brother birds, greatly are ye bound to praise the Creator, Who clotheth you with feathers, and giveth you wings to fly with, and a pure air to breathe, and Who careth for you, who have so little care for yourselves." Anybody who has a love for birds, and remembers how kindly Jesus spoke of them, will overhear that little sermon to the birds

with pleasure ; but they will hardly believe what the legend tells, that the feathered congregation stopped and stretched out their necks, and opened their beaks, "and not one of them stirred from his place until the man of God gave them leave ; when with his blessing, and at the sign of the cross, they flew away."

The next story is of the same order. When he was walking over the marshes of Venice he heard a multitude of birds pouring forth their songs. "Our sisters," he said, "are praising their Maker ; let us go into their midst, and sing to the Lord our songs." But when he and his brethren began to sing, the birds drowned the human voices in their own loud twittering, when the holy man cried, "Sisters, cease until we have finished our praise to God." And again, after he had listened to their noise, he said, "Sisters, it is now time that I should speak." Of course he was immediately obeyed.

A falcon which built a nest near the cell of St. Francis at La Vernia, roused him every night by flapping its wings at the hour of matins ; but when he was sick the bird was kind, and called him a little later.

Another tale will be more easily believed. He met one day near Siena a man selling doves caught in a snare. "Young man," said the saint to the fowler, "don't kill them, I beseech you, but give

them to me." When he had obtained them, he took them to the convent, and made them nests, and fed them every day with his own hand, and the young man became a friar.

Plainly St. Francis was very fond of birds and other living things; and it is not unlikely he gained a good deal of power with those pretty creatures by his gentle ways, and even won an instinctive influence over them. How a canary will form a friendship with one who feeds and pets it! How pleasant to see pigeons in St. Mark's piazza at Venice coming down from the housetops and the pinnacles of the Duomo, to light on the shoulders of any one who carries a bag of peas to feed them with. They will nestle in love on the bosom of strangers. There are instances in which people exercise an unaccountable power over bird and beast, stroking them as with a sort of mesmeric touch, talking to them as though they could understand, and making them obedient to words and signs.

Nothing in the living world seemed to come amiss to St. Francis, and his imagination was sure to make up for deficiencies of speech. Even a tench, when caught by a fisherman and given to the friar, who restored it to the lake, kept near the boat, and followed it until he had finished his prayer. His disciples, who no doubt sympathized with him, delighted to record such childlike anecdotes.

The wonderful preaching to the fishes ascribed to Antony of Padua, surpasses anything we find in the story of St. Francis, or in the legend of another saint, who is said to have exhorted the very frogs to sing unto the Lord.

With the whole of nature St. Francis lived in constant sympathy. The earth he called his mother, the moon his sister. He blessed God for the winds that blew in his face, for pure water and joyful fire, for the flowers under his feet, and for the stars over his head, saluting all as members of one family.

He devoted himself to mission work, not only in his own country, but abroad. His journey to the East is very famous. He had little or no sympathy with the Crusaders—certainly not in their fighting propensities, for he hated war and he hated persecution. In this respect he was unlike St. Dominic. He landed in Palestine. The Christian army at the time was in Egypt. Saracens were marching in that direction. Francis went over to the leaders of the host, to persuade them not to engage in battle. He told them they would be defeated. They would not believe it, but he was right; and on they rushed to the destruction of 6,000 men amongst them.

He did not wish to kill the Saracens, but to convert them; and he and his companions found admission to the presence of the Sultan at the hazard of their lives. Entering the royal tent, he was asked,

“Who are you, and whence do you come?” Francis said, “To show the way of salvation.” The Sultan listened, and was impressed at the wonderful manner in which this stranger talked. “If you and your people be converted,” the latter went on to say, “I will remain with you for the love of Christ; but if you are doubtful, command a great fire to be kindled, and I will enter it with your priests, that it may be seen which faith is most powerful.” The priests did not relish the proposal, and the Sultan said, “I don’t believe any one of them would risk his life in defence of his faith.” Then Francis went so far as to offer to go at once into the flames. “If burnt,” he said, “it will be for my sins. If I come out safe it will be for your salvation.” The challenge was not accepted.

St. Francis returned to Italy, visiting Palestine again by the way; and on reaching his own country, he heard with joy that five of his brotherhood, who had gone to preach the Gospel to the Moors, had been honoured to receive crowns of martyrdom.

Besides Assisi, there is another place, not far from Florence, closely connected with this extraordinary man. It is up amongst the hills, above the wooded Vallambrosa. He rested under an oak, and soon birds came flapping their wings, and perching on his shoulders, in his bosom, and close to his feet. When his companions saw this they marvelled

greatly. And he said, "I believe, dearest brethren, that our Lord Jesus Christ is pleased that we should dwell in this solitary mount, inasmuch as our brothers and sisters, the birds, show such joy at our coming." Just by he built the convent of La Vernia.

In that wild retreat is the chapel of the *Stigmata*. It marks the spot where Francis is said to have received the marks of the Lord's passion. In a vision he saw some seraphic being, who held between his wings a figure of the Crucified One. Immediately afterwards, St. Francis received in his own person marks corresponding with the wounds of Jesus in his hands, and feet, and side. Bonaventura, one of his followers, declared that he saw after his master's death these very marks, and he believed that they had been impressed by piercing rays, which fell upon his body while he gazed upon the vision. That legend has occasioned more controversy than anything else in his story. Some have believed it firmly; some have counted it a superstitious trick. Some resolve it into the effect of heated imagination; some consider that the tale was invented after his death. That it was a superstitious trick in which he had any share is an idea incredible to all who have studied the life and character of so simple-minded, so artless, so self-sacrificing a man. It is far more reasonable to suppose that invention had to do with the story after he was gone; and in favour of this

view, it is urged that he himself never showed the marks to anybody, nor did anybody testify that he had beheld them in his lifetime. Many said they were seen, but not one said "*I saw them.*" That there would be invention in relating the story is most probable; but that it was a pure invention from beginning to end is by no means likely. His personal attendants were not cunning rogues, seeking to make money and fame out of the master they revered and loved; they were sincere and earnest, though mistaken, bent upon doing good according to their light. That something out of the common way had happened to him, which gave rise to exaggerating imaginations afterwards, is the most reasonable belief. Instances are on record of people receiving physical impressions on their persons from objects they had seen, and it is quite possible that the extraordinary experience of a man like St. Francis, in a state of religious fervour, becoming known to some of his brotherhood, may have formed a basis for the famous legend.

Many miracles were attributed to him, which may be explained without saying they were intentional deceptions or lying wonders. The time, the place, and the habits of the people must be taken into account, if we would judge of the subject correctly. Italy, in the thirteenth century, was not like England in the nineteenth. The poetical scenery, the build-

ings, the pictures, the traditions of the period, the spirit which floated in the air, and the faith which lived in an unseen world, made Italians very different from what Englishmen are now. Therefore, without deception, without falsehood, it was but natural for them to believe what we utterly reject. They were fanciful, full of sensibility, always looking for marvels ; in short, the very opposite of sharp, clever folks, who are full of hardness, suspicion, and incredulity.

Before his death he became very weak, and in that state was conveyed to Rieti.

He had become wonderfully popular by that time, and the roads were filled with Italians, who welcomed him on his way. He was taken to a priest's dwelling surrounded by a vineyard. People pressed in to see him, and trampled down the good man's vines ; doing, as he thought, great mischief. But when the grape gathering came, the vintage was richer than usual, which, of course, was turned into a miracle.

Francis underwent an operation in his eye ; and in those rude days a heated iron was used for the purpose. Accustomed to talk to everything alive or dead, he said, " O brother fire, before all other things, the Most High hath created thee of exceeding comeliness, powerful, beauteous, and useful ; be thou to me, in this my hour, merciful, be courteous. I beseech the Great Lord, Who hath created thee, that He may temper for me thy heat, that I may

be able patiently to endure thy burning me." How like a little child! When the operation was over, he cried, "Praise ye the Most High! for I truly tell you, I neither felt the fire's heat, nor pain of body."

At Rieti, notwithstanding his blindness and other infirmities, he went preaching about the neighbourhood, looking after lepers, and taking care of the poor, till his friends were alarmed lest he should fall into danger; they, therefore, appointed four of their number to watch over him constantly. On his way home he rested under a fig tree, and entered a village church to pay his devotions. At Cortona, and by the lake Thrasymene, he was on old familiar ground, amidst the vines, and flowers, and birds he so dearly loved.

At the foot of the hill at Assisi he finished his final journey in this world. There only remained for him that other journey the most desirable, the most blessed, the most glorious of all.

Shortly before death he was, at his own desire, carried to an open space near the Porziuncula, which he had built himself in the days of his obscurity, and ever after regarded as the cradle of his order. "Never, my sons," was his dying charge, "never give up this place. If you go anywhere, if you make any pilgrimage, come back to your home; this is your holy house of God." He bid the bearers set down his litter on a spot

commanding a view of the town ; then, solemnly lifting up his hands to Heaven, he blessed the objects which rose on the hillside, dear to memory, though now, from increased blindness, hidden from sight. " Pausing," as Mrs. Oliphant says, " with his hand, as it were, on the very door of heaven, he makes his musing, gentle survey (in spirit), with no regret, no passion, a composed and tranquil calm. He was but forty-four, and might have been still (had he thought of his own health or life half as much as he had thought of God's service) in the fulness of a man's strength."

It appears that he was, with all his austerities, fond of sweetmeats—*mortiarioli*, as the Romans called them—made of almonds and sugar. A little touch of nature this which I cannot omit. Some sweetmeats were brought him by a lady, Signora Giacobba, an early friend, who had assisted the brethren. The story has been doubted, because he was not a man to relax the severity of his own rules. I hope it is true ; for this touch of childlike nature at the last redeems weaknesses of a different kind in earlier life.

The circumstances of his departure are minutely detailed ; and, Bonaventura informs us, that as the brethren surrounded him, he extended his hands in the form of a cross, and so blessed all, present or absent, with the sign of the crucified.

In the particulars preserved no mention is made of the stigmata. Just before breathing his last, he asked that the thirteenth chapter of St. John might be read, after which his dismissal came as these words left his lips: "I cried unto Thee, O Lord, and said, Thou art my portion and hope in the land of the living. Consider my complaint, for I am brought very low. Bring my soul out of prison, that I may praise Thy name."

There is a fresco I much admire by Ghirlandajo in the church of the Trinita at Florence, representing the saint's death. There he lies, a corpse on the bier, with friars kneeling round or bending over, kissing his hands and his feet. Acolytes appear with lighted tapers and burning censers, whilst a bishop is seen reading the office for the dead. This picture, no doubt, preserves some legendary account of what took place after his departure.

The great building at Assisi is threefold. A crypt of modern construction covers the tomb; a chapel for Divine service, commonly called the Lower Church, presents in its low-browed roof, arches, and wall, a glorification of St. Francis, in a series of paintings attributed to Giotto and other early artists. The uppermost edifice of all displays twenty-eight legends, amongst which, in addition to those I have given, we see the friar dreaming

of the armour provided for his spiritual soldiers, then appearing to them in a chariot of fire, and also, like Moses, fetching water out of a rock. He is further represented carried, as a corpse, to his resting place.

The legends encircling his life have their centre in a far-reaching sympathy with all the works of God. The charming stories told of his loving companionship with nature are credible enough when we remember the man's character. They would be incredible if told of his contemporary, whom Pope Innocent saw in his dream, as one support of a tottering church. St. Dominic showed a fierce orthodoxy, admitting of no tolerance for those who differed from him ; he resembled the disciples when they were calling down fire from heaven to consume Samaritans. The Inquisition is a sad monument of his mistaken zeal, and he inspired his order with a cruel perseverance, which kept it up in terrific strength through long, long years. He lived a troubled life, and met with a death of violence through the resentments he inspired. St. Francis comes as a contrast to St. Dominic. Orthodox in his creed, with the faith of a little child, he was meek and gentle towards all his fellow-creatures, so as to bind even a sultan with the spell of his changeless charity. It is truly said, "Our own acts are our attending angels, in whose light or shadow we walk continually." The angels

attendant on St. Dominic were those of the Apocalypse, blowing trumpets of terror, and pouring out vials of wrath; those attendant on St. Francis were from Bethlehem, and prolonged the music so sweet in the shepherds' ears, "Peace on earth: good will to men." The legends I have given form a picture frame of birds amongst wreaths of flowers, in which fittingly to set the life of one who shines with a fascinating radiance amidst the gloom of the thirteenth century.

CHAPTER XVI.

AN ARDENT FRANCISCAN WORKER.

“The portrait of an extraordinary man who was awakened to the higher life in a very remarkable way ; a man of a rare variety of high qualities and intellectual endowments, and in whom all these were illumined by a glow of holy love. We see by his example how much that is great may remain slumbering in a man until he is brought, by the breaking in of a sunbeam from above on his heart, to a consciousness of himself, and thus to energetic action. Manifold talents are required for the missionary work which must be inspired by the Holy Ghost : every one cannot effect everything under all circumstances.”—NEANDER.

CHAPTER XVI.

AN ARDENT FRANCISCAN WORKER.

THE order and spirit of Francis of Assisi spread far and wide. Amongst many who came under his influence soon after his departure from the world was one, of whom no notice is taken in "Lives of the Saints." In his memoirs, written by those who knew him, there is much more of authentic history than of mere legend. Indeed, there is very little respecting him that can be strictly called legendary at all; in that little we find veins of indisputable truth. He deserves a much higher place in the annals of genuine sainthood than he has received, and rises very far above some to whom amazing miracles are ascribed. Of usual "signs and wonders," none, I believe, are ascribed to him; but his attainments and his virtues were of an eminent description, and of much more value than many acts recorded in Church calendars.

His name was Raymund Lully; and the different aspects under which he is presented are rather perplexing. By some he is described as little

better than insane ; by others as a philosophical genius. Mr. Hallam, following Tenneman and Lord Bacon, speaks of him depreciatingly, noticing only a book of his called "Ars Magna,"—the contents and purpose of which, I must confess, after some endeavour, I am unable to understand. But Neander, the Church historian, who held Lully in the highest estimation, supplies information respecting his life and opinions, from which we receive a favourable impression of his genius, character, and career. The Dominican friars detested him, and accused him of heresy ; the Franciscans vindicated him as orthodox ; and Wadding, the zealous biographer of the order, describes him as a saint. He was a voluminous writer, and a catalogue in the Escorial Library enumerates four hundred and thirty of his works, most of which remain unpublished.

His missionary labours are surprising, the more so that, though he connected himself with the Franciscan order, he continued a layman to the end of his days. His conversion and adventures supplied material for legendary associations, which are, I believe, substantially true.

He had been a dissipated man, even after his marriage, and on paying a visit to a lady with an immoral design, he felt greatly shocked ; and was effectually driven from his wicked purpose by her displaying before him a hideous disease, from

which she was suffering at the time. Another story of a different kind is, that whilst engaged in the composition of some amatory verses, he saw a vision which became a new turning point for the whole of his after life. Neander tells us that, one night, as Lully was lying on his bed composing a love song, the image of Christ crucified came before his eyes, and made so strong an impression that he could proceed no further. Then he persevered: but at length he felt compelled to desist. Day and night the image floated before his imagination, and he could not resist its power.

This story would be somewhat parallel to an account given by Colonel Gardiner, who, on the point of a vicious assignation, "apprehended, to his extreme amazement, that there was before him, as it were suspended in the air, a visible representation of the Lord Jesus Christ upon the cross, surrounded on all sides by a glory." The vision arrested him in his sinful course, and made him a pious believer in the Crucified One. A like result followed the vision of Raymond Lully. He felt assured of Divine love. He said to himself, "He is so gentle, patient, and compassionate; He calls all sinners to Him; He will not cast me out, notwithstanding my sins."

Fired with missionary enthusiasm, he resolved to devote himself to the conversion of Mohammedans. He repaired, in the place where he was, to a church,

and begged the Lord, with many tears, that He who had breathed the thoughts into his soul would enable him—first to complete a work he had commenced in defence of Christianity, next to institute missionary and philological colleges, and finally to sacrifice life itself in the cause of his Great Master. Upon this last point he felt as strongly as any primitive Christian ever did. He heard a bishop preach on St. Francis's renunciation of the world, and resolved immediately to follow that saint's example. Accordingly he sold his possessions, only retaining what was necessary for the maintenance of his wife and family. He purchased a Moorish slave that he might learn Arabic, but hearing the man blaspheme, he chastised him with severity; in revenge for this the slave attempted his master's life, and having failed, hanged himself in prison. As the acquisition of languages was essential to the accomplishment of missionary labour, Lully persuaded the King of Majorca—the island where he was born—to found an abbey for the education of Franciscan missionaries. This was accomplished, and he sailed to Genoa, on his way to North Africa. Celestial visions returned; now they were the means of increasing his missionary ardour. Also he had before him images of danger and death, of captivity and martyrdom. They damped his courage awhile, and he shrank from going on board the ship

in which he intended to sail. Remaining on shore, conscience troubled him, and a severe illness followed the agitation. Then he heard of a vessel bound for Tunis ; and being too ill to walk, he requested he might be carried on deck with his collection of books, but his friends persuaded him not to proceed. He yielded to their entreaties. When another ship was offered he was more successful ; and " that health which, under the beclouding of his conscience, he believed himself to have lost, he suddenly recovered, rejoicing in the Lord on account of this merciful illumination of the Holy Ghost, together with the restoration of his suffering body." At last, reaching Tunis, he assembled round him several Moorish scholars, and told them he had come to talk about Christianity, as compared with the Mohammedan faith. After some disputation, a Mussulman obtained an edict against the troublesome visitor ; but another, more tolerant, interceded on his behalf, so that, instead of death, Lully was only sentenced to banishment. They told him he would be stoned if he tarried any longer ; but, hoping against hope, he persevered in his endeavours. Then, after being forced to remove, he resolved to return to Tunis ; yet whilst lying in the bay he continued to pursue his missionary preparations. Having waited for a landing three months in vain, he felt compelled to give up his plans and sail for Naples. There he

continued for some years, delivering lectures on his system of philosophy. Hope came back, and he hastened to the city of Rome, trusting he might secure the protection of the pope. In this, however, he failed.

Returning to Majorca, he mixed with Saracens and Jews, arguing with them all, that Jesus of Nazareth was the Christ of God. He then proceeded to Cyprus and Armenia, aiming at the restoration of divided sects to orthodoxy and union. It was not easy to divert such a strong-willed man from persevering in his plans; hence once more he sailed to the shores of Africa. In Bugia, a Mohammedan city, east of Algiers, he gathered together a great crowd, and proceeded to preach, when people took up stones to pelt him to death, but the Mufti came to his rescue. This magistrate asked Lully how he could be so mad. Lully replied, "A servant of Christ, who has himself embraced the true faith, can fear no peril, if he may only lead souls to salvation."

Further discussion followed; then came an agreement that the advocates on both sides should write in defence of their religions. Lully, with characteristic ardour, at once sat down, and soon completed a volume, which he sent to the Mufti. No answer came, except in the form of a peremptory order for the departure of so troublesome a disputant. The

Saracens shipped him off to Genoa. On the coast near Pisa the vessel was wrecked, and some on board perished, but Lully escaped with the loss of his books and the rest of his property. In a monastery at Pisa he took up his pen once more, to write from memory that which had been composed already, but had been engulfed in the waves of the Mediterranean. Afterwards he attended the Council of Vienne in A.D. 1311, and succeeded in procuring a decree for the institution of Arabic chairs at Salamanca, Paris, and Oxford.

This remarkable man was wise beyond the age in which he lived. "I see many knights cross the sea to the promised land, imagining that they can subdue it by force of arms, but it ends in their all being swept away without attaining their object. Wherefore it appears to me that the Holy Land is to be won in no other way than that, O Lord Christ, by which Thou and Thy Apostles did win it; by love and prayer, by the shedding of their tears and blood. Since the holy sepulchre and the promised land can better be recovered by preaching than by force of arms, let spiritual heroes go forth filled with the grace of the Holy Spirit. May they go thither to bear witness to Thy sufferings before the infidels, and from love to Thee to pour out the last drop of their blood, as Thou didst do from love to them."

“Because Christians and Saracens are involved in a spiritual war on account of the faith, a carnal warfare is the consequence; whence many are wounded, taken captive, or slain, which would not happen if there were no such war. Whosoever, therefore, O Lord, desires to establish peace between Christians and Saracens, whosoever desires that the great evils which result from this war should cease, must first put an end to the bodily conflict, that this outward peace may be a preparation for spiritual peace.” These are Lully’s own words, and a man who could cherish and express such sentiments, though never canonized, bears favourable comparison even with the great St. Bernard.

In A.D. 1314 we find Lully once more sailing back to the scene of his former labours. He had left a little company of converts at Bugia; these he revisited, that he might encourage their continuance in the faith of Christ. But the people again wreaked vengeance on this persevering assailant, and dragged him outside the walls of the city, where they stoned him till he was left for dead. One account says that some Majorcan merchants removed the body of the martyr from under a heap of stones, and took him to his own country to be buried there; another, that he was extricated before his death, and did not expire until he came within sight of his native shores. He died in A.D. 1315.

It may be further mentioned, that he disapproved of force in the service of religion, and in one of his books he says, "If, O Lord, those churches which are built of wood, and stone, and earth are beautiful, because they contain many beautiful pictures, far more beautiful would be that holy Church which consists of the spirits of just men, if there were those in it who, knowing various languages, would go forth through all lands to lead the heathen to glorify Thee."

The man whom I have described was of a decidedly exceptional type. In several respects he appears out of sympathy with the age in which he lived; one of those gifted, and clear-sighted, and bold-willed spirits, who pursue a path of their own, equally proof against the flattery and opposition of mankind. Religious individuality at the time was almost crushed out of the life of Christendom; men, like sheep, followed their shepherds, having no will of their own, and certainly losing personal independence in vast gregarious fellowships. Lully stands out a noble exception in this respect, thoughtfully choosing and boldly pursuing his own course. After death he was praised by Wadding, historian of the Franciscan order; but there appear to have been in his lifetime no signs of love and reverence for him shown by members of the brotherhood.

Popular saints, who fell in with the religious spirit

of the day, were the heroes glorified in legendary tales, imaginary invention threw a brilliant halo round their names alone ; hence the pale appearance of one whose adventures must have supplied abundant materials for picturesque illustration.

CHAPTER XVII.

MYSTIC NUNS.

A heavenly feast no hunger can consume,
A light unseen yet shines in every place ;
A sound no time can steal ; a sweet perfume
No winds can scatter ; an entire embrace
That no satiety can e'er unlace ;
Engraved into so high a favour there,
The saints with all their peers whole worlds outwear,
And things unseen do see, and things unheard do hear."

GILES FLETCHER.

CHAPTER XVII.

MYSTIC NUNS.

MYSTICAL views of religion have found a congenial soil in the Italian and Spanish mind. Its imaginative power, keen sensibility, and passionate affection have contributed to the formation of a long list of pious mystics, amongst whom St. Catherine of the fourteenth, and St. Teresa of the fifteenth century are eminently remarkable.

When I was in Siena, I came upon a curious house of which I was in quest, having two doorways, one of them bearing this unique inscription, "Spousa Christi, Katherine Domus." The rooms are turned into chapels and oratories, containing a wonder-working crucifix, and several paintings representative of this spouse of Christ—the far-famed St. Catherine, who so greatly revered the character, and so carefully walked in the footsteps of her namesake of Alexandria. Another building close by—the church of St. Dominic—is also connected with her history, as she became a nun of the Dominican order, though she continued to make her home in the dwelling just described.

She began to have heavenly visions at an early period. One evening she was walking with her brother on the hill above the Fonte Branda,—a fountain much resorted to by the Sienese,—and overlooked by the church of St. Dominic. She sat down with him under the shadow of the Campanile, when, lo, the heavens opened, and she beheld Christ on His throne, with St. Peter, St. Paul, and St. John behind. She was in an ecstasy, and gazed upwards, till the beautiful dream melted, and the tower was left naked against the pure blue sky. She threw herself on the ground and wept.

Beautiful and clever, she won the name of Euphrosyne; but being averse to games, pastimes, and city shows, and loving to be alone in the church aisle before her chosen shrine, or in fields and woods outside the city walls, she was unpopular with those of her own age, nor did her mother, though uncommonly fond of her little Catherine, approve of all her ways. Indeed, she suffered persecution from some of her family, but though they thwarted her in her pursuits, they could not hinder the retirement of her soul. The Lord taught her to build there “a private closet, strongly vaulted by Divine providence. He assured her that by this means she should find peace and repose which no storm or tribulation could disturb or interrupt.” Her cell was her paradise, and praise and prayer her joy.

Yet she could not get out of the way of temptation, and she often fancied herself on the edge of a precipice, with a bottomless abyss yawning at her feet. Trembling with agony, she felt a Divine hand holding her up. "I was with thee," she thought she heard Him say. "What! when tormented with those abominations?" "Yes, they were painful, but victory over them was owing to My presence." Then pride took the place of despondency. Darkness came robed in a dress of deceptive light. The former tempter now flattered. He who had failed to force now strove to seduce. But, aware of his purpose, she prayed to her celestial Friend for a new heart, which He literally gave her, for she said she saw Him take the old heart out of her bosom, and place there His own instead.

But amidst these strange reveries—at a period when she walked St. Dominic's pavement at night, and saw her Saviour there, Who talked with infinite condescension, as she told her friends—she busied herself in acts of charity, and attended people afflicted with loathsome diseases—leprosy and cancer, for instance—in return for which she only met with upbraiding and insult. Corpses which forbade any one's touch she would lay out with her own hands. Those who had no sympathy in such acts of faith attributed her self-denial to spiritual pride, and even sister nuns taunted her with imperfections, which she sought

to overcome. A legend is preserved of her attending to the place of execution an assassin,—some say two,—who, through her intercession, endured the stroke of justice with “the meekness of a lamb.” At the moment there appeared a vision of the God-man bright as the sun ; and she was assured of the culprit’s salvation. Visions were common occurrences. Christ visited her bearing in one hand a diadem of jewels, in the other a crown of thorns. She chose the latter, and crushed the prickly points into her temples. The crowning imagination was that Christ gave her a marriage ring, which she felt sure encircled her finger, though nobody could see it but herself.

Akin to all this is the story of her receiving a Divine impress of our Lord’s wounds on her own person.

I have not seen any minute account of the incident, but in a few words it was as follows. She was praying once, as the day dawned, in the chapel of St. Christina, and whilst she prayed she was transfixed, and felt wounds in her hands, and feet, and side—like those of the Saviour. It is said the marks remained, and though she concealed them, the miracle became known to many, who published it abroad.

No date is given for the wonder ; but however it happened, it must have been about a century and a

half later than the stigmata of St. Francis. It looks like a repetition of the more famous experience of the founder of the convent at Assisi. It is believed in Siena, and elsewhere, to have been a miracle of the same kind ; but an early biographer, St. Antonio, of Florence, who was born soon after her death, says that the stigmata were not impressed on Catherine's *body*, but on Catherine's *soul*. What that means, and how it could be known, is not explained.

Everything is said that could be devised to prove the story of St. Francis ; but no attempt seems to have been made to prove the story of St. Catherine. The Franciscans rose up in arms against the advocates of the new legend, and would not allow *their* saint to be deprived of his exclusive honour. They petitioned Sixtus IV. to decree that the stigmata should not appear in pictures and statues of St. Catherine ; but in this case a papal decree took little effect, for there are plenty of church pictures in existence which exhibit the Sienese virgin with marks upon her like those of the friar of Assisi. It is a further indication that the Italian belief has not the Church's sanction, when we find Butler, in his "Lives of the Saints," omitting mention of any stigmata in the case of St. Catherine. Scarcely less wonderful than these legends of what is supernatural are the undisputed facts of her later history. The saint

became a politician, and acted as an embassadress to different courts.

She lived in times of trouble. Italy was torn to pieces by ecclesiastical and political wars. Pope was opposed to pope. Those who professed to be successors of St. Peter quarrelled over their titles. City fought against city, partly on account of this papal dispute, and partly from old feuds and factions. The nun attempted to mediate. She travelled to Avignon, where one of the claimants to the bishopric of Rome was living in exile. Her object was to persuade him to come to terms with his enemies, and return to the city, which was the seat of his throne. One part of her errand was unsuccessful. She could not persuade Gregory XI. to make peace with Florence. The Florentines commissioned her to act as their advocate, but what she did proved in vain. When she returned to the city on the Arno, she found the citizens as ungrateful as the old women at Siena had been. But she succeeded in helping to bring the pope to Rome. She met him on the way, and accompanied him there. When he thought of going back to Avignon, she induced him to stay where he was. Urban VI., who succeeded Gregory XI., appointed her representative to the Court of Naples, and she actually went as he wished. All this is strange and out of keeping with the rest of her story, though it was better for her to take an

interest in public affairs than to be absorbed in her own visions.

Some of her letters show good sense, especially one in which she says: "I do not see how we are to govern others unless we first learn to govern ourselves."

She died on the 29th of April, A.D. 1350, and is buried before the high altar in the church of Sta. Maria Sopra Minerva, near the Pantheon. Lamps constantly burn in front of the marble sarcophagus which contains her ashes. Sad is it to see the use made of her memory in the inscription over one of the pillars. All the indulgences and privileges in every church of the religious orders, mendicant or nonmendicant, are especially promised in the place where her body is interred.

St. Teresa was a Spaniard, born at Avila in A.D. 1515, a daughter of grandees, and brought up in scenes of luxury and pride. She spent her early days amidst courtly splendour surrounded by abject misery, such as could be conjoined nowhere else so closely as in Spain when Philip II. occupied the throne. Her father was bookish and her mother sickly, and though both were religious, such training as they could give was not suited to a nature like that of Teresa.

When twelve years old she lost her mother, but before that, she had shown a taste for religious read-

ing. She and her little brother were wont to wander by themselves, conning over Spanish stories of saints and martyrs who had gone to heaven, and exclaiming, as they thought of eternity, "To see God for ever, and for ever, and for ever; what must that be?" The duration of life after death, the blessedness of it for the saved, the misery of it for the lost, made a lasting impression on Teresa's mind. It is mentioned that when they were about eight or nine, they were fired with zeal for missions, and a desire for martyrdom, so much so that they actually ran away together, hoping to reach the Moors, who had been driven out of Spain.

Avila, where they lived, has an old church outside the city walls, dedicated to SS. Vicente, Sabina, and Cristela, who, according to a cherished legend, were put to death on a rock just by; and in a doorway might be seen angels carrying up a soul to paradise. These objects were well adapted to kindle the extraordinary aspirations of these children.

Teresa loved to be alone, and to think much of the Blessed Virgin, but better still, she thought of the Virgin's Son; dwelling on what He said to the woman of Samaria, and praying, "Lord give me her thoughts." It was not unnatural that in a country like Spain, where convents were common, affording a refuge for ladies sick of the world, Teresa should wish to enter one of these retreats. The Carmelites—an order

which absurdly pretended a descent from Elijah—had a house in Avila, and were popular in the city. That order she entered, and made her profession, as it is called, when she was twenty. Then she might be seen in a tunic of dark brown, with a mantle and hood of white.

Now begins the legendary part of her history.

For four days she was in a trance, and those who watched her thought every hour would be the last. At one moment she appeared quite dead, and the nuns were on the point of burying her, when Don Alfonso prevented them. She revived, to endure intense agony. She could not swallow, and bit her tongue through pain, while all her bones seemed out of joint, and she could not stir hand or foot. She remained a cripple for nearly three years. Her experience afterwards becomes what may be called a legend of *conflict and victory*.

Her long conflict consisted of a strange battle between two selves in the same person, and two lives at the same period.

St. Paul, in the seventh chapter of his Epistle to the Romans, speaks of the flesh and the spirit,—of the law which is spiritual, and the nature which is carnal,—and represents them as at enmity the one with the other. He also speaks of the old man and the new man as conflicting powers. Teresa keenly entered into this phase of experience, and being

intensely imaginative, described it as if it had been a physical and material struggle. She thought, talked, and acted differently from sober-minded people. Her self-consciousness became so diseased, that she habitually made unreasonable experiments on her soul,—now administering a bitter medicine, then performing a painful operation. She constituted herself at once physician and patient, surgeon and subject, and accordingly reached desired results. Casuistry, as it is called,—that is, an inquiry into what, under particular circumstances, may be right or wrong,—was a favourite study with Spanish theologians, and she pursued it with amazing avidity. Whether she had done right or wrong in reading certain books, in mixing with certain companions, in frequenting certain places, were to her questions of absorbing interest and importance ; to the neglect of meditations upon those evangelical truths which give the conscience peace, afford consolation under the trials of life, and impart strength for the discharge of duty. She tormented herself with memories of past faults, instead of accepting the pardon offered in the Gospel, and despaired of a happy Christian course, instead of hoping for the strength which is made perfect in weakness. A court of justice, when a stern judge sits on the bench, and a trembling culprit stands at the bar, where there is condemnation above and terror below, may be taken as an image of the con-

dition of her soul. She did not know the joy of Gospel trust. "In returning and rest shall ye be saved; in quietness and confidence shall be your strength." Well would it have been for her if she had made the cross a prop to support her spirit, rather than simply an instrument for self-crucifixion. Her conferences with priestly confessors, her submission to Church rulers, only made the matter worse.

She, at one time, attempted to reconcile her monastic life with worldly associations. In convents there are rooms with doors and gratings, through which nuns are allowed to converse with friends. Teresa spent a good deal of time in talking through the bars of a window with acquaintances, who "dissipated her mind, and infused earthly affections and inclinations." Other nuns spent much time with such visitors without harm; why should not she? She continued to have stealthy fellowship with the outside world, and also to perform accustomed devotions in chapel and cell. Now she would be at the grated opening, talking with gossips; next she would be in the choir chanting the Virgin's praise; Whilst living these two lives she was very unhappy. Her experience is aptly described by herself as "a tempestuous sea of twenty years, between fallings and risings." The rise, she says, was very imperfect, and she soon relapsed. She appears on the stormy ocean in a little boat without oars or rudder.

In the midst of these conflicting experiences came another impression. "One day, whilst she was conversing at the grate with a new acquaintance, she seemed to see our Lord, who represented Himself to the eyes of her soul with much rigour in His countenance, testifying that her conduct displeased Him." All this is no doubt a truthful representation of her experience.

Now follows the legend of victory. Strife came to an end. She conquered herself.

On a certain occasion she went into the oratory, and gazed on a picture of Christ covered with wounds. She fell prostrate on the floor, shed torrents of tears, and poured out fervent prayer. She dwelt more than ever on the Redeemer's sufferings, and this inspired fresh love to Him. She is represented in Spanish art on her knees, dressed in mantle and hood, with outstretched hands, looking upwards to a winged angel, who descends with a flaming dart about to be plunged into her bosom.

Much is said of her "devotion" to Mary Magdalene. The love of Jesus is beautifully shown in the Scripture story of that woman out of whom He cast "seven devils." Devotion to Him was her duty and privilege; but "devotion" to her, or any other saint, is a state of mind out of harmony with Scripture. The imitation of Christian virtues is quite another thing.

Teresa was at home in the invisible world. She

heard a voice saying, "I will not have thee hold conversation with men, but with angels." Then followed a series of visions and raptures. They carried with them, she said, their own evidence. "Far within," these are her words, "God appeared to me in a vision, as He had been wont to do, and gave me His right hand, and said, 'Behold this print of the nail; it is a sign that from this day forth thou art My spouse. Hitherto thou hast not deserved, but hereafter, not only shalt thou regard My honour as that of thy Creator, and King, and God, but as that of a true spouse; for My honour is now thine, and thine is Mine.'" Another instance of the same kind is also recorded. "Once, when I held in my hand the cross which was at the end of my beads, He took it into His hand, and when He gave it to me again it appeared to be of four great stones, incomparably more precious than diamonds." It had engraved on it five wounds, and when she looked on it afterwards, she never saw the material cross as it had been, only the precious stones; but she adds, "No other saw them but myself"! She beheld devils, and drove them away by the cross or by holy water; and once, when praying, she had a vision of hell, showing her what she deserved, and where she would have gone but for Divine mercy.

Physical effects are recorded as the consequence of her visions and raptures. She was lifted up a

few times from the ground. Her feet rose from the floor in spite of resistance, and this she curiously explained, saying that the Divine power over the body is such that the body cannot master it. The Spirit draws the body after it with such sweetness and delight, that sensation is not lost. The wonder, she declares, made her hair stand upright; still her fear was wrapped up in excessive love. She goes so far as to say that the miracle happened twice at church, where it could not escape the observation of others; but she prayed that it might not occur again.

Bodies of saints floating in the air are depicted in old paintings. It may be remembered by some that a picture in the Louvre gallery, by Murillo, represents the ecstatic St. Diego, lifted above the floor of a kitchen where angels are busy performing the office of cooks. Murillo and Diego, like St. Teresa, were Spaniards, and there seems to have been no limit to their absurd fancies.

The order with which Teresa identified herself had sadly degenerated. She determined to reform it, and laid the foundation of a new convent in Avila, in A.D. 1562, dedicated to St. Joseph, the husband of the Virgin. She commenced her enterprise amidst difficulties. Other sisterhoods were jealous of the work to which she consecrated herself. The dream of unity in the Romish Church during the Middle Ages

and in the sixteenth century is an utter delusion. Monasticism filled Christendom with strife long before the days of Luther, and the hatred of one order against another makes up much of ecclesiastical history, age after age.

In spite of envy and resistance, in twenty years Teresa accomplished a vast monastic reformation; extending, as she did, a new rule over a large part of Spain. She lived to see fifteen nunneries of her own foundation.

A strange but characteristic legend of this saint relates to the way in which she spoke of the Scriptures. She was absorbed with the idea of Church authority, when a young woman, who wished to enter a convent at Toledo, said, "I will bring with me my Bible." "What!" said Teresa, "your Bible? Do not come to us. We are poor women, who know nothing but how to spin and *to do what we are bid.*" This incident reveals the temper of Teresa and her times. Yet, notwithstanding her devotion to the Church, she did not escape accusations of heresy.

In A.D. 1582 she returned from Burgos to Avila, by way of Alva, where she was taken very ill. The Duchess of Alva went personally and ministered to her wants. Her confessor, in presence of the nuns, requested she would pray for her own recovery, but she replied she was in no way needful to them nor to the world. The sacrament being brought, she

sprung up in bed, and cried, "O my Lord and my Spouse, the desired hour is now come. It is time for me to depart hence. Thy will be done. The hour is at last come, wherein I shall pass out of this exile, and my soul shall enjoy, in Thy company, what it hath so earnestly longed for." This was a rapture, yet she died a penitent, saying, "A contrite and humble heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise."

Mr. Ford, in his "Handbook for Spain," calls Teresa "a love-sick nun." Mrs. Jameson says in some respects the epithet may be deserved; but though there have been thousands of such nuns, there have been few women like her. "Under no circumstances could her path through life have been the highway of common-place mediocrity; under no circumstances could the stream of her existence have held its course untroubled; for nature had given her great gifts, large faculties of all kinds, for good and evil, a fervid temperament, a most poetical 'and shaping power' of imagination, a strong will, singular eloquence, an extraordinary power over the minds and feelings of others—genius, in short, with all its terrible and glorious privileges."

Another mystic appears in the legend of St. Frances, of Rome, who frequently saw and conversed with celestial beings. She had a guardian angel of exquisite beauty, who was a constant, and, to her, a visible companion. She described him as wear-

ing a tunic, now white as a lily, then red as a rose, next blue as the sky. Afterwards he was changed for another, brighter and still more beautiful, who wove a golden woof with threads drawn from a palm branch. She lived in the fifteenth century, and a Life of her, written by Lady Georgina Fullerton, is a highly-wrought romance, and vies, in point of wonder, with saintly legends of earlier days. She married when very young, and her life soon afterwards was threatened by a dangerous illness, when St. Alexis, as she thought, appeared, and threw a mantle over her wasted and almost inanimate body, and restored her at once to perfect health. She had three children, and for a while lived in domestic felicity, as well as in costly magnificence; but then, through the invasion of Rome by the King of Naples in A.D. 1498, she was reduced to utter indigence. One of her children died, and afterwards revisited her, "beaming with ineffable splendour," and accompanied by an angel. Child after child was taken, but temporal circumstances having brightened, she was restored to a position of worldly prosperity; then she formed a society of noble ladies, devoted to works of benevolence, called the Oblates of St. Mary. After her husband's death, she entered this institution, not as foundress, but as suppliant. The sisters chose her as their directress, and her sanctity won

not only their love and reverence, but the admiration of the Roman people at large. After death her appearance became beautiful, as in the days of youth; and many came for particles of her clothing as relics of miraculous virtue. She was invoked by the crowd, and her name was heard in every part of the eternal city.

A festival in her honour annually occurs in Rome, and attracts much attention. The Oblates of St. Mary are so called because their order is an oblation in her honour. They appear to be a branch of the Olivetani, or congregation of the Blessed Virgin of Monte Oliveto.

CHAPTER XVIII.

CHURCHES IN ROME.

“Many believe, with Addison, that ‘the Christian antiquities are so embroiled in fable and legend, that one derives but little satisfaction from searching into them.’ And yet, as Mrs. Jameson observes, when all that the controversialist can desire is taken away from the reminiscences of those who, to the Catholic mind, have consecrated the homes of their earthly life, how much remains! so much to awaken, to elevate, to touch the heart; so much that will not fade from the memory, so much that may make a part of our after life.”

AUGUSTUS J. C. HARE.

CHAPTER XVIII.

CHURCHES IN ROME.

DURING a recent sojourn in Rome, I revisited several churches, and revived recollections of legends, some absurd and useless, others more or less probable and instructive.

I begin with the Basilica of St. Paul without the walls, and the churches of the Tre Fontane, as they are called. Miracles are connected with their origin.

The first church, in honour of St. Paul, belonged to the monastery of St. Anastasius, who, influenced by a strong desire to suffer for the name of Jesus, was, after a long imprisonment, put to death at Cæsarea. The magnificent marble edifice, which bears the Apostle's name, is of modern erection, in place of an ancient one burnt down in A.D. 1823. The earlier plan is preserved. A Basilica built by Constantine was rebuilt by Valentinian, Theodosius, and Arcadius. With it were connected certain cemeteries and an oratory of St. Anacletus. The porches contained pictures with inscriptions, badly written in Greek and Latin characters. The interior

contained frescoes, which formed a kind of book, in which the ignorant could read acts related in Scripture, and in church chronicles. In an elaborate work entitled, "Les Sept Basiliques de Rome," I find notices of ecclesiastical celebrities who visited the church, but no legends of any interest.

Half-an-hour's walk from the Basilica brings us to the Abbey "delle Tre Fontane," and its three churches. The largest is dedicated to St. Vincent, and St. Anastasius just now mentioned. The next is S. Maria Scala Cœli, so called from the vision of a celestial ladder, like Jacob's, once seen there, with souls delivered from purgatory mounting up to heaven. The third church is "S. Paolo alle Tre Fontane," reported to stand on the spot where the Apostle was beheaded.

The three churches are well known to visitors. Thirty years ago they stood in a scene of desolation and misery. Now the desert rejoices and blossoms as the rose. The surrounding garden is beautiful, and a ramble in it is truly refreshing. I have before me a little book, purchased on the spot, entitled, "L'Abbaye des Trois Fontaines," by "Le Révérend père Dom Gabriel, Abbé d'Aiguebelle." In it the author repeats the oft-told story, that Paul was fastened to a column and beheaded. The head took three leaps as it fell to the earth, and each time a fountain gushed forth. "Tradition," says the Abbé,

“ adds that the lips, as the head touched the ground, pronounced in Hebrew the name of Jesus.” Many fathers of the Church report that milk, in the place of blood, flowed abundantly from the severed neck.

It is also related that a Roman lady watched for the martyr on his way to execution, and wept as he passed by ; in compliance with his request she gave him her veil to cover his eyes before the death stroke, he promising to return it afterwards. When he had been “ offered up,” the gift came back to the hands of the giver. The legend occurs in the Story of Perpetua published in “ Apocryphal Gospels Acts and Revelations.”

Respecting the Lateran Basilica, according to an ancient tradition, “ the Lord testified His acceptance of this church ; and, on the day of its dedication, manifested His glory as in the temple of Solomon, only in a more resplendent way.” The Saviour’s image was depicted on the walls, in the sight of all the people. Inscriptions to that effect, introduced by Nicholas IV. (A.D. 1288), speak of the appearance in decided terms, and many authors, we are told in “ Les Sept Basiliques,” declare, that the words *pax vobis* were pronounced by the image at the time of the marvellous apparition.

Near the Lateran is a building which contains a double staircase, called the *Santa Scala*, of which tradition says that it was brought from Jerusalem

by Helena, Constantine's mother, and that the stairs are those once standing in Pilate's palace, and were ascended and descended by our blessed Saviour.

No one who honours the memory of Martin Luther, but will recall to mind one incident connected with this staircase; when, as he was doing penance on the steps, which he superstitiously regarded at the time, as did other German Catholics, there flashed upon him the words of Scripture, "The just shall live by faith." It proved a key to open the door, through which he escaped from spiritual terrors, and through which also multitudes since, all the world over, have gained a like deliverance.

We must proceed to St. Peter's, on the Vatican Hill.

The bodies of SS. Peter and Paul, it is affirmed, were for a time preserved in the Catacombs, and afterwards removed to the Vatican grottoes, where Constantine laid the foundation of the first cathedral. Eight days after his baptism, having stripped off the purple mantle, and put aside the imperial crown, he prostrated himself on the ground, shedding abundant tears; after which he marked out the site of the proposed structure, and commenced it by laying the first stone.

The basilica is rich in relics; amongst them is the *Veronica*, or likeness of Christ, impressed on a

handkerchief, which was given him to wipe his face by a woman commemorated under that name. But the genuineness of the relic and the story connected with it are questioned even by Roman Catholic archæologists. A legend is related which connects St. Peter's at Rome with St. Peter's at Westminster. Edward the Confessor had made a vow to visit the shrine on the Vatican, but the Great Council protested against his leaving the country. He was released by the pope on condition of founding or restoring an abbey at Westminster, in honour of St. Peter. The pilgrimage was performed by proxy. In connection with this incident, it is said that a cripple, who had gone to Rome six times in hopes of obtaining a cure, obtained there a promise from St. Peter, that the benefit would be enjoyed, if King Edward would carry him on his back to the altar at Westminster. He shouldered the man, and bore him to that altar. Restoration to the use of his limbs immediately followed. This legend has been touched in my chapter on "Anglo-Saxon Saints."

Next to St. Peter's, in point of interest, is S. Maria Maggiore. In the fourth century, when Liberius was bishop, there lived in the city a pious couple, named Patricius. Being very rich, and having no children, they desired to express devotion to the Virgin, and incessantly prayed that she would indicate what they could do in honour of her name.

One hot summer's night, in the month of August, there rested on the top of the Esquiline Hill a fall of snow,—snow being a symbol of the Madonna's purity,—and it marked out a piece of ground with the utmost precision. That same night the Virgin appeared to Liberius, and commanded him to build a church on the spot. She informed the bishop that Patricius would co-operate in the work, and also required the former to repair to the place in procession with the clergy and people. At the same time she appeared to Patricius and his wife, announcing, "with ineffable sweetness," her acceptance of their vow, and charged them to construct for her a house on earth, which would prepare for one eternal in the heavens. The devotees hastened to obey, and proceeding to the Esquiline, saw the miracle which confirmed the vision. There they met the bishop, who welcomed them with great joy. A procession of priests marched thither, singing psalms and reciting prayers; when they arrived, the bishop traced the outline of the intended edifice, and at once a new prodigy, greater than the snowfall, presented itself—the earth opened and disclosed foundations already laid.

Faith in the legend is still expressed by showers of white rose leaves in the Borghese Chapel at the *festa* of La Madonna della Neve.

With different parts of the building plenty of

legendary lore is entwined. The mother of the Emperor Leo, the Arminian, dreamed that she saw the Virgin, accompanied by other virgins, dressed in white, entering the church, the pavement of which streamed with blood. The Virgin gathered the blood into a large vase, and presented it to the empress, at the sight of which she recoiled; then Mary told her that her son, the emperor, was pouring out the blood of the faithful by the war he was carrying on against the use of images, and was thereby treasuring up wrath against the day of wrath.

The corpse of Jerome is said to be preserved in the Basilica, the saint having appeared to a cenobite, ordering that his remains should be removed there, because the benign queen of heaven had so tenderly watched over him during his life in this world. He directed the tomb to be placed beside the cradle of the infant Christ, which is the crowning relic of the temple.

Legends of St. Laurence cluster round the Basilica which bears that name. He was a Spaniard, and a deacon of the Church in Rome under Sixtus II. Sixtus was condemned to die. "Whither goest thou," asked Laurence; "am I unworthy to pour out my blood with thine? St. Peter suffered the Deacon Stephen to die before him, wilt thou not suffer me to prepare thy way?" "I do not leave thee," was the bishop's reply; "three days after me

thou shalt follow, and thy battle shall be harder than mine." It was so. Laurence the Levite followed Sixtus the priest. He was stretched on a gridiron, and was slowly consumed to ashes. His last words are reported to have been, "I thank Thee, O my God and Saviour, that I have been found worthy to enter into Thy beatitude."

The Basilica of Sta. Croce in Gerusalemme, near the Lateran, belongs to a palace of Helena, mother of Constantine; "the Invention of the Cross" is celebrated in it on the 3rd of May, when are sung the following words, which, if they do not express an act of idolatry to a material object, it is hard to say what words could do so: "O cross, more glorious than the stars, world famous, beauteous of aspect, holiest of things, which alone was worthy to sustain the weight of the world; dear wood, dear nails, dear burden-bearer, save those present assembled in thy praise to-day. Alleluia."

The Empress Helena went as a pilgrim to Jerusalem, and sought for the Saviour's cross. At that time there was in the city a woman lying at death's door. The empress and the bishop having discovered the remains of three crosses near the Holy Sepulchre, prayed that the cross of Jesus might be identified through the woman being healed by it.

Two of the crosses were tried in vain. The third restored the patient. Also a dead body was raised

to life by virtue of the third cross, when the first two had failed to work the wonder. Helena had the cross divided into three parts; one was left for the Bishop of Jerusalem, the second was sent to Constantinople, the third to Rome, where it is enclosed in a magnificent silver case. The empress built for it the Basilica of Sta. Croce.

Legends of the cross run back to the earliest period. They say that Adam was once at work when he leaned on his spade, feeling tired of life, and longing to die. He called to his son Seth, and said, "Go to the gates of Eden, and ask the angel, who guards the tree of life, to send me some of the oil of mercy which God promised when He drove me out of paradise." Seth asked the way. "Go by that valley which lies towards the east," Adam replied. "There you will find a green path, along which you will see footsteps; for where my feet and those of your mother passed no grass has ever grown." Seth traced the footsteps, and reached the garden gates. He delivered his father's message to the guardian angel; but he could not get the oil. Instead of it, he received three apple pips from the tree which bore the forbidden fruit. He delivered them to his father, who soon afterwards died in peace. The seeds were sown in the earth, and grew up each separately, and then marvellously united in one, an emblem of the Trinity. Moses found the tree

in the valley of Hebron, and with it sweetened the bitter fountain at Marah. From the tree came the rod which smote the rock in the wilderness. It passed down to David, who wrought miracles by means of it, and planted it in a walled garden, where, seeing it, Solomon cut it down to serve as a beam for the temple. But the builders could do nothing with it, for it always proved too short or too long. So it was thrown aside and neglected for years. A Sybil came and sat upon it, and prophesied that it would lead to the destruction of the Jews, whereupon the people, enraged, flung it into the river. It afterwards was turned into a bridge; but when the Queen of Sheba came on a visit to Solomon, she would not put her foot on this sacred timber. She saw in a vision what it was to be, and knelt down to worship. After this she unfastened her sandals, and waded through the water barefoot. She told the king the tree would be the instrument of saving the world, whereupon he overlaid it with silver and gold, and fixed it over the temple door. Rehoboam stripped off the precious metals, and then buried it to cover his theft. A well was dug on the spot, and it became the pool of Bethesda, where the sick were cured. The wood was seen floating on the water just before our Lord's death, and being thought fit for the purpose, the Jews removed it to Calvary, and crucified Him upon it.

The church of St. Sebastian stands beside the Appian Way outside Rome. The original building is attributed to Constantine; the present one is of the seventeenth century. Sebastian is buried under the altar.

Sebastian was a Roman officer in the third century. He strove to preserve the Christians from persecution. When he saw two friends undergoing terrible torture with fortitude, he could no longer conceal his convictions, but, rushing forward, applauded their consistency, and expressed his fellowship with them in love to Jesus. The emperor charged him with disobedience and ingratitude, when he replied, he had ever prayed for His Majesty, and been true to his service, but to worship his gods, that was impossible. Diocletian,—for he was the emperor,—ordered him to be bound to a tree, and there to be shot with arrows.

A pious widow, named Irene, found that the arrows had not touched any vital part, and she removed him, extracted the barbs, dressed the wounds, and restored him to health. He would not leave the city, but faced the tyrant, and raised his voice on behalf of other sufferers. “Art thou not Sebastian?” he was asked. “I am,” he replied; “and God hath delivered me from thy hand, to intercede for His servants.” Now, he was beaten with clubs, till life was extinct beyond recovery. The emperor

intended that the corpse should be flung into the Cloaca Maxima, but Lucina, another devout woman, defeated this purpose, and secretly interred the remains in the Roman Catacombs.

The Church of St. Gregory, near the Coliseum, at the foot of a hill covered with vineyards, has strong claims on the attention and interest of English people; for it is connected with Gregory the Great, Bishop of Rome and Latin Doctor, who had much to do with the introduction of Christianity to the south of Britain, after it had been conquered and repaganized by the Saxons. His father was a Roman officer of distinction; his mother, Sylvia, was a pious woman, and the boy took after his mother. The father, tradition says, was tall, with a long face, a grave countenance, "green eyes," a moderate beard, and thick hair; the mother's face was round and fair, and beautiful even in old age, her countenance cheerful, her eyes blue and large, and her lips comely. It is further said that Gregory used to dress, after the fashion of his day, in a purple-striped robe, and in rich-coloured silk, and adorned himself with gems; but he was a religious youth, though not converted, like Augustine. When he put on the brown garment of a monk he fasted and mortified himself, so as to bring down his life to the edge of the grave.

Fond of chanting, he went about Rome in pro-

cession during the plague with a number of priests, repeating in a litany the words: "We beseech Thee, O Lord, in all Thy mercy, that Thy wrath and Thine anger may be removed from this city, and from Thy holy house." At the end of one of these services, it is said that an angel from heaven stood on the top of the Emperor Adrian's monument, sheathing his sword in token of the plague being stayed.

Gregory was elected to the Roman bishopric, but tried to avoid the dignity. At length he accepted it. "Lo, my most serene lord, the emperor," he wrote in a vein of humour, "has ordered an ape to be made a lion. In virtue of his order, an ape can be *called* a lion, but he cannot be *made* one. My faults and shortcomings must be charged not on me, but on him."

It was before he became bishop that a conversation in the Roman Forum took place which was first related by his Deacon John.

Some boys with clear complexions, bright eyes, and flaxen hair were offered for sale. "Where do they come from?" Gregory asked. "From Britain," it was replied. "Are the people there Christians or pagans?" "Pagans." "Alas! that with such beautiful countenances, they should be under the power of darkness; that so fair without, they should have no grace within. What do you call them?"

“Angli,” Anglians. “Well, indeed, they have angelic faces, and should have angelic souls, and be co-heirs with angels in heaven.” “From what province come they?” “Deira.” “Right again, from Deira (*de ira Dei*), the wrath of God; let them be saved, and brought to the mercy of Christ.” The king of the province was named Aella. “Alleluiah!” said Gregory, who must have been fond of punning, “Alleluiah! the praise of God shall be sung in that country.” Gregory wished to go himself as a missionary to England, and for this purpose obtained from the bishop at that time permission to visit our shores. In fact, he started with other monks, and when the Romans heard he was gone they were in sore dismay. The bishop sent to fetch them back. When the messengers reached Gregory he was reading a book, and a locust settled on a leaf of it. He could not help punning again. “Locust means *loco sta* (stay where you are); and it shows we are not to go any further. Saddle the horses, then, and away back.”

What he could not do himself, he determined, after he became bishop, to do by means of others. He sent to England a monk named Augustine, or Austin with several of his brethren.

St. Gregory lived in a house where stands the monastery I have mentioned. Broad steps run up to a portico in front, and from that spot, tradition

says, he sent forth the missionaries who came to our fathers in the reign of Ethelbert.

John, the Deacon, Gregory's secretary, declares that he saw a dove perched on his shoulders at the time he was writing his homilies. That dove is interpreted to mean the Holy Spirit, and it may be seen in old pictures whispering in the bishop's ear. A vision of the Crucified One is also represented descending before him, as he stood on the altar steps. His supper is a favourite subject. When he was in the monastery at Rome a beggar came and asked for alms. Relieved, the suppliant came again and again. At length nothing remained in the house but a silver vessel, in which Gregory's mother prepared his pottage. Accustomed to entertain twelve poor men every night, he once found thirteen sitting down at table instead of twelve. He called his steward, and asked, "Did I not direct you to invite twelve, but there are thirteen?" The steward counted them, and could make but twelve. After supper, the bishop called the stranger guest, and said, "Who art thou?" He replied, "I am the poor man whom thou didst relieve; but my name is the Wonderful, and through me thou shalt obtain whatever thou shalt ask of God." No one can read that story without seeing in it a parable of the two texts: "Be not forgetful to entertain strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares." "What-

soever ye shall ask in My name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son." The legend is frescoed on the monastery walls.

In our own National Gallery there hangs an old painting entitled "Trajan and the Widow," and it is closely connected with Gregory. It happened at the time of the incident that the emperor, at the head of his army, was going to battle. A poor widow came and cast herself at his feet, crying for justice on account of the death of her son, whom the king's son had cruelly slain. Trajan was about to put her off with a promise that the case should be attended to when he returned. "But should you be killed, who would do me justice then?" urged the importunate suppliant. "My successor," he rejoined. Then she said, "What will it signify to you that any other than yourself should do me justice?" Trajan got off his horse, and examined the widow's tale, and then gave up his own son in place of the youth she had lost. One day the bishop, reflecting on this story, felt touched at Trajan's conduct, and prayed to God not to punish such a man, although he was a heathen. A voice came, saying, "I have granted thy prayer, and spared the soul of Trajan for thy sake." This condition was added, that Gregory should endure two days' punishment in the other world for the emperor's sake, or be sick and infirm for the remainder of his days. He chose the latter.

The legend shows it was believed then that one human being could, by his own suffering, take away the sin of another, and that prayer for the dead availed for their salvation. No one did more than Gregory to establish the doctrine of purgatory.

Everybody goes to see Ara-Cœli, and nobody ever forgets it. The Bambino is sure to be inquired for; and it is then stripped of its coverings and exhibited to the tourist's gaze. A ridiculous story is told of its being once stolen, and a counterfeit image placed in its stead, when one night there was a furious ringing at the church door, and the true Bambino was found on the threshold, shivering with cold.

Upon a pier, close to the Gospel Ambone, is the tomb of Catherine of Bosnia, daughter of the Duke of St. Sava. Her husband was King Stephen Thomas, murdered by his son and his brother-in-law. The widow continued to live near his tomb, in the church of St. John at Sutisca, doubtful as to her own safety. Her deceased husband had there been favoured with a vision of Christ; and in a picture preserved by the monks connected with the church the legend is depicted. She was engaged on the embroidery of sacred vestments—a stole and chasuble worked in golden threads—when, alarmed by tidings of a Mohammedan invasion, she, leaving the vestments unfinished, fled for her life on foot

across the mountains, and over a limestone desert, to an old Bosnian seaport. Then, in a small boat, she hurried to the other side of the gulf, and landed at Ragusa. There she resided for a while; afterwards, she set off once more on pilgrimage, this time to Rome, where she entered a convent, and distinguished herself by meekness, patience, and charity. On her monument she appears with a crown on her head, a rich chain round her neck, and a book in her hand.

She came from a country where monks wrought miracles. One of them, we are told, "while addressing a congregation of heretics, stepped into a large fire, and, with great hilarity, stood in the middle of the flames, whilst he recited the fiftieth Psalm." And again, "Upon the eve of St. Catherine, A.D. 1367, a mighty heavenly flame appeared in the east, with an intense light terribly apparent to the whole globe. At that time, they say, that the loftiest mountains of Bosnia, with all rocks, cattle, wild beasts, and fowls of the air, were miraculously consumed, so that they were reduced to a plain; and there dwelt the Paterini Manichæans, who say that God burnt up those mountains for their convenience, because He loved their faith."

There is no church in Rome dedicated to St. Philip Neri, but, in the Chiesa Nuova, is a gorgeous chapel containing his shrine, and in the adjoining

convent of the Oratorians are personal memorials of this popular founder of the brotherhood.

“A story,” says Archdeacon Hare, in one of his sermons, “is told of a very good and pious man, whom the Church of Rome has enrolled among her saints on account of his great holiness. He was living at one of the Italian universities, when a young man, whom he had known as a boy, ran up to him with a face full of delight, and told him that what he had long been wishing above all things in the world was at length fulfilled, his parents having just given him leave to study the law; and that thereupon he had come to the law school at this university, on account of its great fame, and meant to spare no pains or labour in getting through his studies as quickly and as well as possible. In this way he ran on a long time; and when at last he came to a stop, the holy man, who had been listening to him with great patience and kindness, said, ‘Well! and when you have got through your course of studies, what do you mean to do then?’ ‘Then I shall take my doctor’s degree,’ answered the young man. ‘And then?’ asked St. Filippo Neri again. ‘And then,’ continued the youth, ‘I shall have a number of difficult and knotty cases to manage, shall catch people’s notice by my eloquence, my zeal, my learning, my acuteness, and gain a great reputation.’ ‘And

then?' repeated the holy man. 'And then' . . . replied the youth; 'why, then, there cannot be a question, I shall be promoted to some high office or other: besides, I shall make money and grow rich.' 'And then?' repeated St. Filippo. 'And then,' pursued the young lawyer . . . 'then I shall live comfortably and honourably, in health and dignity, and shall be able to look forward quietly to a happy old age.' 'And then?' asked the holy man. 'And then,' said the youth, . . . 'and then . . . and then . . . then I shall die.' Here St. Filippo lifted up his voice, and again asked, 'And then?' Whereupon the young man made no answer, but cast down his head and went away. This last 'And then?' had pierced, like a flash of lightning, into his soul, and he could not get quit of it. Soon after he forsook the study of the law, gave himself up to the ministry of Christ, and spent the remainder of his days in godly words and works."

This is one of the most edifying legends which I remember in connection with Rome, where St. Philip Neri lies buried.

CHAPTER XIX.

CONTRASTS AND VARIETIES.

“ To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under heaven : a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted : a time to weep and a time to laugh : a time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together.”—ECCLES. iii. 1—5.

CHAPTER XIX.

CONTRASTS AND VARIETIES.

LEGENDS are remarkably varied, and they inspire, even as they reflect, opposite moods of our many-sided nature. Delight in humour is often accompanied by sympathy in all which is tender and pathetic. There are men addicted to merriment, who can easily glide from the gay to the grave; and others, whose hearts are deeply touched by sorrow, who can pass in a moment from the grave to the gay. The fact is, where emotional capacity is deep, there will be depths in the undercurrents, as sunshine and cloud alike will be thrown up from the surface of the waters.

Many legends have more than a touch of what is grotesque. In the midst of a tale of horror you meet with something which is exceedingly ludicrous. The story of St. Laurence's martyrdom makes our flesh creep; but who can suppress a smile when, coming to that part where he is said to have exclaimed, while broiled on a gridiron, "Seest thou not, O thou foolish man, that I am already roasted

on one side, and that if thou wouldst have me well cooked, it is time to turn me on the other?" It is likely that the traditionalist, rather than the hero, would indulge in such pleasantries.

Many a schoolboy has been diverted, when in his History of England he has met with the scene at Glastonbury, where St. Dunstan at his forge seizes the devil's nose with a pair of tongs. That kind of incident does not stand alone in legends of the archbishop. He could, in earlier life, clamber up a scaffold, and wander on the roof top just like a cat, and sleep there through the night, and descend the next morning in perfect safety, nobody knew how, except that they thought he must possess miraculous gifts: perhaps it was the result of brain fever. He fancied he was pursued by demons in the form of dogs. He is said to have played all sorts of ridiculous tricks, and to have frightened, when he only intended to amuse, some high-born dames. He often filled the air with sounds coming no one knew whence; and Southey thinks there can be no doubt that he was a very clever ventriloquist. Butler, in his "Lives," is silent respecting such accomplishments.

Amongst decidedly facetious legends, the first place may be assigned to that of "St. Christina the Wonderful." There are two St. Christinas, one in the Coptic, the other in the Belgian martyrology.

The former seems to have been marvellously agile and eminently skilled in gymnastics. She smashed the idols of a heathen temple, and then, throwing a rope out of the window, slid down by it, taking with her fragments of the shattered image, which she distributed amongst the people. When this exploit occurred does not appear. The date of her existence is uncertain. Her namesake, who is said to have been born in A.D. 1205, is distinguished by achievements much more surprising. She might well be called "Christina the Wonderful." She fell down in a fit, and was taken up for dead. Carried to church to be buried, she burst out of her coffin, and chased the mourners in all directions, and then scrambled up a pillar, and sat on a rafter of the roof, "just like a bird." She professed to have a delicate sense of smell, and could not endure the odour of dirty peasants; to get away from it she would climb a church steeple, sit on the weathercock, and there air and purify herself. She loved to live in the boughs of trees, and being captured after nine weeks of such pranks, she rushed headlong into churches, asking for the Holy Communion; and then raced at the top of her speed, the priest after her, till she came to the banks of the Meuse, and, plunging in, reached the opposite side, where she wrung her wet clothes in the sight of her wondering pursuer. She entered baking-houses, and crept into ovens;

scattered fire-brands in the streets, and walked over them with naked feet; jumped into vessels of hot water, got into a mill sluice, and shot over the whirling wheel—all without injury. At midnight it was her delight to tear about in the woods, with dogs at her heels. When caught and tied up she would escape from her captors, wrenching off chains and pulling up flagstones. I am tired of following adventures which might cover pages more. The wild story winds up with her residence in a nunnery. As she was on her deathbed, the superior said to her, "Christina, you have always obeyed me—return to life." She opened her eyes, and replied, "Beatrice, why do you trouble me? I was on my way to the next world. Now tell me quickly what you want, that I may be gone." She was told, and the next moment she expired. Yet, after all this, a woman is introduced in the legend, with a divine revelation, twenty-five years afterwards; and in consequence of her intervention Christina was dug out of her grave, and enshrined as a saint, miracles attending the removal of her remains.

Some readers will hardly believe that such a narrative can be sanctioned. But it is,—according to Baring Gould, who cites the sources whence he obtains it. They are the "Belgian Benedictine and Cistercian Martyrologies," and "the Gallican Martyrology of Saussaye." He mentions also a

“Life,” by Thomas de Chantpré, O.P., at Louvain, who was a contemporary, and “had all the particulars from those who had seen and conversed with Christina.” Butler says nothing of this strange creature; and there is no evidence, that I can find, of her canonization being sanctioned by Church authority. Canonization by the people outran canonization by the pope.

Probably this legend of Christina is unequalled, but there are plenty which, amidst graver traits, contain a strong spice of humour, especially those relative to Irish saints. For instance, St. Kevin had charge of a noble infant who was fed with doe’s milk. A raven upset the bowl. “Bad luck to thee!” exclaimed the saint; “when I am dead, there will be a famous wake, but no scraps for thee and thy clan. Whilst all the mourners are making merry below, thou shalt be croaking round the mountain top, supperless, for not a bite shalt thou have.” St. Moling, of Ferns, one summer’s day sat reading, when a fly lighted on his book. A swallow seized the fly. Immediately Moling’s cat bounded on the bird, and swallowed it. “Fie, puss,” he exclaimed; and then, “Fie, bird.” The cat threw up the bird, and the bird the fly; neither was the worse for what had happened. The author was evidently bent on a bit of fun. Both legends relate to the seventh century. Respecting

the same period, Thomas Fuller says, "Most of the miracles assigned unto Augustine" (the first Archbishop of Canterbury), "intended, with their strangeness, to raise and heighten, with their levity and absurdity to depress and offend true devotion: witness how, when the villagers in Dorsetshire beat Augustine and his followers, and in mockery fastened fish tails at their backs, in punishment hereof, 'all that generation had that given them by nature, which so contemptibly they fastened on the backs of these holy men.' Fie, for shame! he needs a hard plate on his face that reports it, and a soft place in his head that believes it." "Polydorus," says Bale, one of the bishops under Edward VI., "applieth it unto Kentish men at Stroud, near Rochester, for cutting off Thomas Becket's horse's tail. Thus hath England in all other lands a perpetual infamy of tayles—that an Englyshman now cannot travayle in another land by way of merchandyse, or any other honest occupyng, but it is most contumeliously thrown in his teethe, that all Englishmen have tayls." Everybody has heard that St. Antony of Padua preached to fishes. "He had no sooner done speaking, but behold a miracle! The fish, as though they had been endued with reason, bowed down their heads with all the marks of a profound humility and devotion, moving their bodies up and down with a kind of

fondness, as approving what had been spoken." So writes the author of Antony's life; and I cannot forget a ludicrous fresco of that unparalleled congregation which I once saw at Padua.

I pass on to another set of legends which contrast with these ridiculous stories.

One day a Frankish noble was riding through a forest, when he heard a girl singing. He dismounted, and found her gathering herbs. He asked her name. "I am a poor iris," she said, "by the waterside, but they call me the little queen." "I greet thee," replied Hyvarnion, "little queen of the spring. How white thou art, and how sweetly thou singest; tell me what flowers thou gatherest?" "I am not plucking flowers; these are simples. This herb drives away sadness, that one banishes blindness, and I look for the herb of life, which drives away death." "Little queen, give me thy simples." "Sir, I give them only to my bridegroom." "Then let me be thy bridegroom, and give me, in token, the herbs which make glad the eyes." Hyvarnion fell in love with the maiden, and married her. After three years this wife of his bore a blind boy, which was called Herve, a name signifying blindness. He used to cry sorrowfully, and nothing comforted him like the songs his mother sang to him day and night. She was left a widow when he was two years old;

and she lost all by her husband's death. The fatherless one went about begging. That heart must have been hard which was not moved at the sight of the little blind boy, "led by his white dog, singing, as he shivered with cold, exposed to wind and rain, with no shoes on his feet, and his teeth chattering in the frost." He composed on All Saints' Eve a "Song of Souls" by his father's grave; and, on the way home, his feet slipped on the wet ground, and he came back to his mother bleeding at the mouth from the injury received. Amidst many troubles Herve reached his fourteenth year, when he said, "Mother, for many years have I gone round the country begging, and I have got but little; for hearts are hard, and times are bad. My mother, I would go into some solitary place, where I could hear nothing save hymns to God." His mother did not oppose this wish; and, guided by his little white dog, he went through the forest in search of her uncle, who lived in a hermitage. At sunrise, one morning, he arrived at the hermit's door. The white dog barked, and the uncle opened to the little stranger, "as the sun tipped his golden hair with a crown of light." The hermit kept school in his cell, and Herve joined the other boys in learning lessons. He outstripped them all.

His mother died, and he went to see her just before she expired. After this the hermit told his

nephew he longed for complete solitude, and would, therefore, leave him to carry on the little school. The school prospered, and evening after evening youngsters left their blind master "as noisy as a swarm of bees issuing from a hollow oak." Herve taught three sayings, which they were to treasure up in their memory: "Better instruct a child than give him riches"; "The idle boy lays up sorrow for his grey hairs"; "He who obeys not the rudder, will run on the reef." He further taught them to pray: "My God, I give Thee my heart, my body, and my soul. Make me a good man, or let me die early." He told them when they saw a black crow they should think of the devil, and when they met with a white dove they should call to mind a holy angel. At length he built a monastery, and sang to his harp songs for the edification of the people. Now he was led about, not by his little dog, but by a little niece, Kristine, for whom he had a cottage built by the monks near the church. She gathered flowers for the decoration of the altar, and, like Herve's mother, loved to sing at her work. The blind man liked to listen. Then she would cry out, "Uncle, I see you!" and he would draw back his head, and disappear, as if ashamed.

Herve had his enemies, and when the neighbouring bishops met for conference, and Herve was

invited, one of them called him a blind vagabond. When he arrived barefoot, clothed in a goat skin, and staff in hand, he touched the hearts of some, as he said to the man who insulted him, "My brother, why do you reproach me for my blindness? God may deprive you of sight, as He has deprived me. It is His will that I am blind, and that you see." A cloud came over the offender, and he was smitten with blindness, but was restored to sight by Herve's intercession.

Herve's death is thus described in a Breton ballad : "The saint said to the little Kristine, 'Tina, my dear niece, make my bed ready, but make it not as is wont. Make it on the hard earth before the altar, at the feet of Jesus my Saviour. Place a stone for my bolster, and strew my bed with ashes. When the black angel comes to fetch me, let him find me lying there. My strength is exhausted, my heart grows weak, my end is nigh.' Then little Kristine began to cry, 'My uncle, if your heart grows weak, mine faints. My uncle, if you love me, ask of God one favour, that I may follow you without delay, as the boat follows the ship.' 'God is master, Tina, my niece, my sister. God sows the grain, and reaps it when it is ripe.'" At the moment of his death, Kristine threw her arms around his feet and expired. The boat followed the ship.

The legend of St. Roch, who is said to have lived

in the thirteenth century, may be coupled with that just read as a contrast to ludicrous fables.

He was born at Montpellier, in France, and early came into the possession of a large estate. He asked the question, "What must I do to be saved?" and in answer accepted our Lord's words in their literal sense, "Sell what thou hast, and give to the poor." He devoted himself to the visitation of the sick, and went on his mission clothed in a pilgrim's dress, with a scrip over his shoulder, and a staff in his hand. He entered Italy, and proceeded to Aquapendente, or Aquila, where a frightful epidemic raged; there he placed himself under the direction of an hospital-keeper, and thus began his chosen lifework. He afterwards went to Casena, on the old Emilian way, and then to the famous city of Rimini, on the east coast of the Italian peninsula. After some confused adventures he is found at Piacenza, where centres the chief interest of his sad story. He is described as plunging into places smitten with disease, and watching hospital patients day and night until he caught a fever. An ulcer appeared in one of his limbs; the pain was excruciating, and, lest he should disturb fellow-sufferers by his cries, he crawled into the streets, and was there treated as a public nuisance.

He was driven outside the gates into a neighbouring wood, where he made "a lodge of boughs and

leaves, always giving thanks to our Lord, saying, 'O Jesus, my Saviour, I thank Thee that Thou puttest me to affliction like to Thine other servants by this pestilence.'" For the alleviation of his sufferings there sprung up near him "a fair fountain," and the water became a great comfort amidst the heat of "a weary land."

Amongst the trees of this wilderness, he acquired a gentle influence over wild animals, and as they came round him, the Golden Legend says they "inclined their heads, and having thus paid their obeisance," they went their way. A goatherd thereabouts kept several hounds, and one of them, which had attracted Roch's attention, was allowed to feed at his master's table. The dog, day after day, carried off a loaf, the people of the house knew not whither. Once the goatherd placed some delicate bread before the animal, who immediately took it away after his wonted mysterious fashion. The man followed, and came to "the lodge of boughs and trees," when he said to St. Roch, "Holy pilgrim, I desire to do for thee what thou needest, and I am advised never to forsake thee." He devoted himself to the stranger, and attended to his wants; and legendary art depicts a dog as the saint's companion and servant. Moreover, an angel ministered to him. When he had fulfilled his mission at Piacenza, he returned to Montpellier, where nobody remembered him; he was so

changed by travel, disease, and work. Nor would he relate his history, or do anything whereby he might be identified. For he longed after martyrdom, and it came, not from sword or fire, but in the darkness and solitude of a prison cell.

But the story most remarkable for its pathos is that of Elizabeth of Hungary, queen of sorrow. She was daughter of the Hungarian King, Alexander II., and first saw the light in A.D. 1207. Espoused as the bride of Lewis, son of Herman, Landgrave of Thuringia and Hesse, she was early removed to the Castle of Wartburg, near Eisenach, to be educated there.

Legends begin with her birth. "Now there dwelt then in the parts of Hungary, in the land which is called 'the Seven Castles,' a certain rich nobleman, worth three thousand marks a year; a philosopher, practised from his youth in secular literature, but nevertheless learned in the sciences of necromancy and astronomy. This Master Klingsohr was sent for by the prince to judge between the songs of the Minnesingers. Before he was introduced to the Landgrave, sitting one night in Eisenach, in the court of his lodging, he looked very earnestly upon the stars; and being asked if he had perceived any secrets said, 'Know, that this night is born a daughter to the King of Hungary, who shall be called Elizabeth, and shall be a saint; and shall be given to wife to the son of this prince; in the fame

of whose sanctity all the earth shall exult and be exalted.'”

In her cradle she was never known to show signs of petulance ; the first words she uttered were words of prayer, and, when only three years old, she gave away her playthings, and bestowed her rich dresses upon poor people.

As a child, she often stole into the castle chapel, where she and Agnes, a daughter of the Landgravine, one day knelt before a crucifix. Elizabeth took off her coronet, and placed it at the foot of the cross. The Landgravine saw and rebuked her. Elizabeth replied, “Lady mother, reproach me not. Here I behold the merciful Jesus, Who died for me, wearing His crown of thorns ; how can I wear, in His presence, this crown of gold and gems ? My crown is a mockery of His.” The Landgravine and Agnes were forced to take off their crowns, but they laughed at her piety ; and Agnes said, “Lewis would never marry such a *beguine*, but would send her back to Hungary.”

Before her marriage she suffered from the jealousy and dislike of the Landgrave's family, though Lewis treated her with consideration and affection. After she entered the bonds of wedlock, and had children, she is represented as cherishing a nun-like spirit, and practising all kinds of austerities.

The legends which illustrate this, I cannot help

thinking, are full of exaggeration and fiction ; as it is allowed, amidst them all, that she lived a domestic life as wife and mother. We are told that she rose at midnight, and knelt on the cold floor, wore hair next her skin, and not only scourged herself, but employed her ladies to help her in the flagellation. She would sit at a banquet eating only crusts, drinking only water. Once her husband took a cup out of her hand, and, putting it to his own lips, tasted wine of the most exquisite flavour. He called the cupbearer, and asked, "What vintage is it?" The cupbearer told his lord that he had poured out only water, as his mistress wished. Lewis believed she was supplied by angels.

One day he wished his wife to appear before his guests in royal apparel. Accordingly she bedecked herself with costly robes, a tunic of green and gold, a tiara of jewels, and an ermine-lined mantle. Thus arrayed, she was crossing the court, when a naked beggar besought her charity. She said she could not relieve him then ; but when he importunately urged his suit, she paused, and, without thinking, stripped herself of her mantle, and threw it on the suppliant's shoulders. Instantly Lewis appeared. She cast herself on his bosom, and confessed the truth. At that moment her handmaid came in with the mantle, which she had found hanging in the wardrobe. She re-arrayed herself, took

her husband's arm, and appeared before her guests with more than earthly beauty, while her jewels sparkled with celestial light. "And who," asked Lewis, "can doubt that the beggar was our Lord Himself, Who had desired to prove the virtue of His servant, and Who had replaced the robe by the hand of one of His blessed angels?"

Elizabeth found a leper boy, cast out because he was so loathsome. Moved with compassion, she took him in her arms, carried him to the castle, and laid him on her own couch. Her mother-in-law heard of this, and when her son's horn sounded at the gate, she hastened to meet him, and brought him at once to his wife's chamber, to see who occupied his place. Lewis was disgusted for a moment, when, behold, the leper turned into a shining babe, "like Him of Bethlehem."

The most marked and popular of all the legends about her is one often represented by artists. Coming down from the castle on a severe winter's day, laden with provisions for the starving poor, she met her husband returning from the chase. "What have you here?" he said. "Let us see!" Poor Elizabeth was confused, because she wished to do good by stealth; moreover, because her enemies reproached her with disposing of her husband's property. She drew her mantle round her, and covered what she was carrying. But he insisted

on seeing what she concealed. Drawing aside the folded robe, he found, in that season of frost and snow, only red and white roses, more bright and sweet than those of midsummer. When about to embrace her, he shrunk back, for suddenly her face shone like the face of an angel, and his affection gave place to awe. Such is the version given by Count Montalembert, but the story is told in different ways.

A legend of the parting between her and her husband, when he was on his way to the Holy Wars, is the most touching of all. "This prince of peace," as Dietrich* calls him, "mounting his horse with many knights, about the end of the month of June, set forth in the name of the Lord, praising Him in heart and voice; and weeping and singing were heard side by side. And close by followed, with saddest heart, that most faithful lady after her sweetest prince, her most loving spouse, never, alas! to behold him more. And when she was going to return, the force of love and the agony of separation forced her on with him one day's journey; and yet that did not suffice. She went on, still unable to bear the parting, another full day's journey. At last they parted, at the exhortation of Rudolph, the cup-

* Kingsley, in his "Saint's Tragedy," gives several extracts from Dietrich's "Life of Elizabeth."

bearer. What groans, think you, what sobs, what struggles and yearnings of the heart must there have been! Yet they part, and go on their way. The lord went forth exulting, as a giant to run his course; the lady returned lamenting as a widow, and tears were on her cheeks. Then putting off the garments of joy, she took the dress of widowhood. The mistress of nations, sitting alone, she turned herself utterly to God, to her former good works adding better ones."

"Now," says Dietrich, in paragraphs respecting her sorrows, "shortly after the news of Lewis' death, certain vassals of her late husband, with Henry, her brother-in-law, cast her out of the castle, and of all her possessions. She took refuge that night in a tavern, and went at midnight to the matins of the minor brothers"; (the minor brothers were an outer circle of friars) "when no one dared to give her lodging, she took refuge in a church. And when her little ones were brought to her from the castle, amid most bitter frost, she knew not where to lay their heads. She entered a priest's house, and fed her family miserably enough by pawning what she had. There was in that town an enemy of hers who had a roomy house, whither she entered at his bidding, and was forced to dwell with her whole family in a very narrow space; her host and hostess heaped upon her annoyances and spite.

She, therefore, bid them farewell, saying, 'I would willingly thank mankind, if they would give me any reason for so doing.'" Perhaps there is a little bit of human nature in this reproach for the unkindness she endured ; and such words would not be likely to appear in the most highly-wrought legends of her perfection.

Death came to her at Marburg, when she was only twenty-three, the very flower of her age. Her conversation edified her attendants, for she spoke of sacred things, especially of the consolation bestowed by the Lord Jesus on Mary and Martha when Lazarus died. The like consolation her friends might hope for. She recalled the Saviour's words, "Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for Me, but weep for yourselves and your children, for behold, the days are coming in the which they shall say, Blessed are the barren and the wombs that never bare, and the paps which never gave suck." Sweet voices issued from her lips, though she did not open them. Bystanders thought they heard music from heaven. At the hour of cockcrowing she whispered, "This is the hour when the Virgin brought forth her child Jesus, and laid Him in the manger. Let us talk of Him, and of that new star which He created, and which was never seen before."

The best kind of saintship which comes out in this beautiful legend has not passed away. While

writing this very chapter, I am told of Christian women in London who are seeking to do good at the cost of immense self-denial,—visiting filthy abodes; plunging into the vilest neighbourhoods to rescue the fallen; laying hold on abandoned creatures of both sexes, plucking them out of the fire; tending the sick, and sitting up with them night after night; patiently following the drunkard with the hope of reclaiming him, and doing so again and again, when disappointment seems enough to crush out hope for ever; at the same time praying and looking up to Heaven, and all from the same motive as burned in the soul of this queen of sorrow—even the love of Christ.

I will now introduce a specimen which comprises, in some degree, the opposite qualities just pointed out, and which also presents a contrast to them in its substance and purpose. It is of Irish origin, and can be traced back to a remote antiquity; but, in the course of time, it has undergone changes, and was immensely popular in the Middle Ages.

There is a saint in the Calendar called Brandon, connected with Clonfert in Ireland, to whom a hermit, named Barintus, came one night, and told him how a nephew of his had performed a wonderful voyage, and how he himself was induced afterwards to do the same, when he reached in the far East an island beautiful as paradise. “In that land was

joy and mirth enough, and all the earth of that island shined as bright as the sun; and there were the fairest trees and herbs that ever any man saw, and there were many precious stones shining bright, and every herb there was full of figures" (flowers), "and every tree full of fruit, so that it was a glorious sight." The report inspired Brandon with a longing after the same enterprise. He gathered together some of his fellow-warriors, and with them went to the top of a hill, where he built a vessel, and constructed in it a cabin made of wattles and tanned hides, and victualled it for seven years. Whilst he was praying for Divine guidance and protection, there came two or three monks who purposed to join him, and he told one of them of a frightful fate which would await him if he went. Off they set; and after forty days and forty nights saw an island, and sailed about it for some time before they could find a landing-place. When they got on shore, a "fayre hounde" fell down at the saint's feet, when he said to his companions, "Be of good cheer, for the Lord hath sent to us His messenger." That messenger led them to a "fayre hall," with tables covered full of good meat and drink. There were also beds ready, in which the voyagers "took their rest after their long labour." Next they came to an island stocked with white sheep and fat oxen, and they heard from an old

man of yet another island, not far off, which was a paradise of birds. One island turned out to be a huge fish, which reminds us of the adventure of Sinbad the Sailor; and the fish was ever trying to catch its tail with its mouth, but could not. At length they reached a fair land of flowers and birds, the birds abundant as leaves. And these birds made "a merry noise like a fiddle." Some of them spoke, and said they had been angels in heaven, and fell with Lucifer; only because they were not as bad as he, God sent them where they were, and they praised Him for His mercy. Brandon and his companions spent their Easter in this land of birds, and remained in it till Trinity Sunday was past. Then they took their leave. A storm arose, by which they were troubled a long time, and "set little price by their lives"; "but they cried continually on the Lord, Who heard and delivered them. At length they reached a country where there was always fair weather, and they met an abbot, who told them of God's bountiful provisions; and, in a church, they saw a bright, shining angel come in at the window, who lighted the lights, and then flew out again into heaven. There they spent Christmas and Palm Sunday, and then returned to the Island of Sheep, where they were received by the old man, who washed and kissed their feet, like as our Lord did to His disciples."

They spent seven years in coasting these eastern isles, keeping one Church festival with the sheep, another on the fish's back, and another with the birds.* The party once was blown northward, and they entered a region of horrors. They met with lightnings, and burning flames, and fiends holding red-hot hooks in their hands. One of the monks began to cry, and leaped into the sea, exclaiming, "I must go into perpetual pain." Then the saying of Brandon was fulfilled which he spake when the monk entered the ship. They revisited the great fish, which, with all the crew on its back, darted away to the paradise of birds. After which the legend goes on to say, "They saw the fairest country eastward that any man might see, so clear and bright, that it was heavenly to behold. All the trees were charged with ripe fruit ; the herbs were full of flowers. It was always day, never night ; the weather was temperate, neither hot nor cold, and they saw a river which they durst not cross. Then came a fair young man who welcomed them, saying, 'Be ye now joyful, for this is the land ye have sought.'" The Lord willed that they should lade their ship with fruit, and depart hastily, for they might no longer abide there. They were to return to their own country, and soon

* Arabian geographers speak of the "Island of Sheep" and the "Island of Birds."

after they would die, "and it was said to them, this water," "that you see here parteth the world asunder, for on that other side of the water may no man come that is in this life." *

So deep and lasting was the impression made by this wild poetical legend, that Spaniards and Portuguese, and Englishmen too, went out in quest of a wonderful land.

" That Eden, where th' immortal brave
Dwell in a land serene,
Whose towers beyond the shining wave
At sunset oft are seen.

* I have followed the prose version given by Mr. Wright in No. xlvi. of the Percy Publications. It is taken from Wynkyn de Worde's edition of the Golden Legend (1527). A metrical version, from the Harleian MSS. is printed in the same volume of the Percy Series. I have omitted a part of the legend which relates to Judas Iscariot, whom St. Brandon met with, sitting naked on a great rock, "in full great misery and pain; for the waves of the sea had so beaten his body that all the flesh was gone off, and nothing left but sinews and bare bones." Brandon pitied him, and pleaded on his behalf with the hellish fiends, but he only had a short respite from further torments. Amongst the Cottonian MSS. is a life of St. Brandon (Cott. Vesp., A. XIX.) with other lives. Prefixed is a brightly coloured illumination of Christ bearing His cross. Further on, are two more of the crucifixion and the entombment. Both are highly finished, like miniatures. This MS. is a specimen of numerous saints' lives. At the beginning of the life of St. Brandon, in the Golden Legend, beautifully printed in black letter, is a dismal woodcut of the saint, with a crosier in one hand, and a book in the other.

“ Ah, dream too full of saddening truth !
Those mansions o'er the main,
And like the hopes I built in youth,
As sunny and as vain ! ”

It is said, what way soever “the Spaniards are called with a beck only, or a whispering voice, to anything rising above water, they speedily prepare themselves to fly, and forsake certainties under the hope of more brilliant success.” Spaniards did discover the Canary Islands in A.D. 1330; but though scenery is beautiful there, and the birds can sweetly sing, Brandon's dream has not yet been fulfilled.

Before closing this chapter, may I be permitted to remark, that in addition to contrasts in point of humour on the one hand, and of pathos on the other, besides such extravagant aberrations of fancy as the last example represents, there exist varieties of legendary lore in which the heroes and the authors take a colouring from localities, and exhibit a decidedly national impress, derived from birth or from long acquaintance with some adopted country. Indeed, the very last legend cited affords an instance, for it is thoroughly Irish. St. Brandon is an Irishman out and out. The dash of wit in the picture of the fish which cannot catch its own tail, and the warbling of the canaries, which, like a running stream, falls on one's ear throughout the story—are all in harmony with the Emerald Isle, the land of the harp and of broad humour. And legends

of Chad and St. Cuthbert, born in the old Anglo-Saxon kingdom, are in scenery and character of the Anglo-Saxon type. Wild forests, bleak hills, and the desolate Lindisfarn form the background; Anglo-Saxon heroism, and self-denial, and endurance come out conspicuously; and whilst the two memorable bishops, after the manner of their race, show no gleams of brilliant genius, they are strong in a habit of plodding toil. Bruno and Bernard, both Frenchmen, are full of the vigorous life, of the commanding authority, and of the ruling power, so characteristic of their countrymen; whilst the latter has much of movement, travelling from west to east and back again, and is full of the fiery war spirit, which, kindled by devotion, burnt in the bosom of Louis, Saint and King of France. Francis of Assisi could have no other appropriate background for his legends than the sunny vales of Umbria and the breezy heights of La Vernia,

“Where sublime
The mountains live in holy families,
And the slow pine woods ever climb and climb.”

In his intense sympathy with nature, with birds, fishes, and beasts, with a vivid imagination living, as Dante's did, in a world of vision and wonder all supernatural, have we not the reflex of the Italian mind and heart in their choicest moods? And then, recalling to remembrance Teresa of Avila, we find in

her the intense mystical temperament of the Spanish devotee, full of passionate emotion, and in constant conflict with sensuous tendencies, the spirit warring against the flesh, and seeking to bind it fast in ascetic chains; the environment of the picture hard and severe, as the snow-sprinkled Sierra, which rises over the fertile Vega, and valleys abounding in green-bordered streams.

To these instances already reviewed, I would here add two more, taken from a country which must not be passed over, the fatherland of Teutonic Christianity. Boniface and Sebald, both of the eighth century, are saints distinguished by missionary zeal among the tribes of Northern Germany. Boniface was not a German by birth, but next of kin by Anglo-Saxon parentage; and through long acquaintance with German people, he may be said to have been acclimatized amongst them. Legends of him are beautifully depicted in the frescoes at Munich, on the walls of the beautiful Basilica which bears his name. There we see him putting on the Benedictine habit, preaching the Gospel to the Frisians, miraculously fed in a forest, hewing down the holy oak of the god Thor, and at last suffering death with his followers at the hand of the Friesland pagans. The cutting down of that gnarled oak, sacred to the god of thunder, was a symbolical act, illustrating the destruction of heathen superstitions, in which

Boniface took the lead, to be followed by other destructions in after years, effected by another sturdy hand and sharp axe. Not far off the spot where grew Luther's beech, and whereabouts now stands a pillar by Luther's spring—marking the scene of his capture when he was taken to the Wartburg—a projecting rock in the domain of Altenstein is pointed out as a spot where Boniface preached the Gospel more than a thousand years ago.

Sebald was son of a Danubian noble, and, being at Rome with two kinsmen of Boniface, and hearing of the spiritual needs of the country where Boniface was doing missionary work, he felt an impulse to join in the same enterprise, and forthwith went to a neighbourhood where Nuremberg now stands, and there converted idolaters to the faith of Christ. He is patron saint of that grand old city, and in a church dedicated to him there are carved on his shrine the legends of his life. One of them is curious enough, for the exquisitely chiselled bas-reliefs show the saint turning stones into bread, rescuing a man from being swallowed up alive in an earthquake, mending a broken kettle by a word of benediction, and, above all, with an icicle which burnt like coal, feeding a cottage fire ready to die out for want of fuel.

In these legends of Boniface and Sebald, German scenery is indicated by the oak and the icicle, German industry is symbolized by axe and kettle, and

German zeal in the propagation of Christianity is reflected in the labours of the two apostles.

Here I must pause. It would be easy to proceed, and to show what a hold legends still have over multitudes of people, and how they are all attuned to the taste of those amongst whom they circulate. It has been said of the Irishman, by a recent historian, "The streams, the valleys, the hills of his native country are peopled by mystic forms and melancholy legends, which are all but living things for him. Even the railway has not banished from the land his familiar fancies and dreams." The same may be said of all European countries, and we cannot look into any volume of folk-lore, any descriptions of manners and customs, whether picturesque or philosophical, where the recognition of the legend element does not appear. It roots itself in all lands, but still grows most vigorously in rural districts, in the woodman's hut amidst ancient forests, and amongst peasants who feed their flocks and cattle on a thousand hills. Often they have a substantial sameness, but they vary in minor particulars. It is everywhere as it is in the south of Italy. "The traditions and fables," says Antonio de Nino in his book on the "Abruzzi," "I do not say substantially, but certainly in form and in circumstance of place and time, vary from country to country, and also now and then from one part of the district to another."

CONCLUSION.

THE legends in this volume have originated and been preserved in various ways. Monks and minstrels invented some ; but not a few are of much earlier date than their days. Cowled brothers in the scriptorium recorded many in which they mingled colours of their own with what existed in their tenacious memory. The harper in the baron's hall sang a lay of some noted saint as well as ballads of brave knights and beautiful ladies. These stories entered into popular conversation ; they were repeated under the village oak and by the peasant's hearthstone. Legends were

“Dark sayings from of old,
Ranging and ringing through the minds of men,
And echo'd by old folk beside their fire,
For comfort after their wage work is done.”

Miracles of saints and ministries of angels were counted as real as any of the historical facts we all believe. A second realm of existence encircled scenes of daily life. It has been said of Athens, it

had another population besides that of busy Greeks—one composed of innumerable statues, amongst which they mixed and dwelt. In like manner, our English forefathers recognized round them forms of departed spirits, but with a faith stronger than that of classic times.

It is common to suppose that all Church legends are false and deceptive. This is an idea without foundation. They may be reduced to three classes. Some are, no doubt, mere fictions invented to increase the offerings sought for at some neglected shrine ; and these deserve censure of the severest kind. Some are imaginative additions clustering close to original facts : in some cases, they were invented at the beginning, and in others have been since interpolated by copyists who strove to heighten effect by indulging in enormous exaggerations of what is wonderful in the simplest form. Some are allegorical fables, composed with a moral and religious intent.

And all of them exhibit the development of a one-sided Christianity, consisting of self-denial in an ascetic and painful form ; of a maintenance, and at the same time a repudiation of merit, most inconsistent, yet to those who are much acquainted with the human heart, quite capable of explanation ; and of sad forgetfulness respecting the blessed truth of a *free* salvation through God's mercy in Christ Jesus,

which brings peace and joy in this life, and a humble yet confident hope of heaven hereafter. By the common consent of Christendom, with all its varieties of creed, the ideal of extreme asceticism, so dear to legendary saints, is, at any rate, practically abandoned, and therefore implicitly disapproved.

With regard to many of the allegorical fables, it may be observed that they are lineal successors of early compositions of the same character. Passing over Apocryphal gospels, of which I have given several illustrations, notice may be taken here of a remarkable book belonging to the second century, entitled "The Shepherd of Hermas." There are in it visions and similitudes. Eusebius says it was read in churches; Dr. Stanley calls it a "Pilgrim's Progress." Neibuhr treats it as a dull affair, and pities congregations obliged to listen to it; perhaps it deserves neither the censure nor the praise. In form and spirit, it is very different from Bunyan's dream; yet, probably, people of the second century listened to it with interest. A work, more entitled to a place in the legendary class, next to the Clementine books already noticed, is "Barlaam and Josaphat," a fable of the fourth century, written in Greek, inspired by memories of desert hermits such as Jerome describes in his stories of Paul the Hermit, and St. Hilarion.

Upon the use which was made of legends light

is thrown in the writings of John Wiclif. He speaks of their being largely employed in pulpit teaching. Dr. Lechler, his latest and best biographer, informs us that this remarkable man "refers again and again to the subject in sermons both of his earlier and later years, as well as in treatises and tracts. We have no ground to assume that sermons of the kind he censures were not preached from Bible texts. It is rather to be supposed that the preachers, after giving out a text from the Scriptures for form's sake, were not the less accustomed to draw the main contents of their sermons from other sources. There were not even wanting instances of preachers who were bold enough to dispense with a Scripture text, and to choose something else." An instance is given of a French song serving as the basis of a pulpit discourse; chosen, I suppose, as some titles are nowadays, to attract the vulgar, and direct attention to religious topics. An Oxford Dominican arranged a number of popular histories, for the use of preachers, entitled "*Summa Prædicantium.*" But legends have been put to worse uses, when employed with a view to saintly intercession. Under the influence of such encouragement, what multitudes invoked the Madonna, the apostles, and many other names in Church calendars! Forgetting Christ's mediation, the misled devotee appealed for help to human souls

in heaven. It seems as though the suppliant never heard that believers had a Divine right to enter into the Holiest of all, by the blood of Jesus, through a new and living way ; or that the love, which beats in the heart of God and Christ, is infinitely greater than what exists in a glorified spirit or an elect angel. It is touching, but pitiable, to think of absorbing attention and desire being turned to those as objects of trust who were themselves redeemed, while an incomparably higher privilege came within the Christian's reach.

“ They may stand near to the pearly gates,
May be close to the Ear of Heaven ;
But who would dwell in the servants' lodge,
When the mansion-house is given ? ”

Extravagance, instead of diminishing, really increases when we go back to the earliest legendary examples. It is not in the Middle Ages, but at the Nicene period, that we read of a monk named Ammon, who thought it unbecoming to see himself naked ; and so, when he came to a river, unwilling to take off his clothes, an angel appeared and carried him over, that he might be relieved from the painful necessity of being undressed. The wildest wonders occur in lives of the famous hermits Paul and Hilarion, written by the learned Jerome ; also in the story of Antony, as told by the great Athanasius. Moreover, Simeon Stylites belongs to the same age,

and the historian Theodoret,* his personal friend, relates miracles which he says he saw the emaciated recluse perform; whilst he also assures us that idolaters came by hundreds and thousands to see the saint exposed to storm and heat at the top of his pillar, forty cubits high, and were converted from heathenism by the amazing sight.

Even these stories are surpassed in Apocryphal books respecting the Virgin, composed about the fourth century.

Many of the stories told admit of an easy explanation. People lived in those days, and in later ones, in a world of enthusiastic imagination, where there was no sifting of evidence but only a greedy appetite for the supernatural; fanatical credulity was at its boiling-point. Objects which were nothing more than creations of an overpowering fancy had all the vividness of actual existence. Coleridge explains the story of Luther flinging ink at the devil, in the well-known chamber of the Wartburg, by attributing to the Reformer a faculty which gave "outness," or external solidity to images of the mind; the same idea may be employed in accounting for some things which saints of old are said to have seen and accom-

* There is a great deal in his *Life of Simeon* to me utterly incomprehensible. Kingsley gives the substance of it in his book on "Hermits," and also an account of Simeon left by Antony—not the Saint Antony of Athanasius.

plished. The effect of solitude and silence, of long fasting, and of prolonged self-inspection, approaching, if not reaching decided insanity, should also be taken into consideration, as we study some of the problems met with in the works of the Bollandists and of Alban Butler.

When we consider the habits which mediæval monks maintained in obedience to the rules of their order, we cannot help seeing how those habits promoted the preservation and growth of marvellous legends. In a small guide book for the use of visitors to the Grande Chartreuse, it is said, the brother who conducts strangers through the cloister, is accustomed to stop and request them to speak in a low tone, so as not to disturb the profound quietness of the sacred solitude. Attention is then called to Scripture texts written over the cells, as revealing and illustrating the monastic life—lifting it on high to celestial regions spoken of by St. Paul: “We look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, and the things which are not seen are eternal.” “It is this supernatural light,” the guide book goes on to say, “which, transforming into a sweet vision appearances so revolting to the eye of sense, adorns the existence of virtuous men; whose life even here is above the world, after the example of the Apostle, who declares our conversa-

tion is in heaven. We understand the mystical and deep meaning of the sacred maxims which, inscribed over each cell, reach the heart as if in spoken words, amidst a mysterious stillness." I can fully understand this, and have no doubt that many a Carthusian was helped by silence and solitude to enter that elevated region of thought to which the Apostle points ; but it also appears to me that much time spent alone in a place like the Grande Chartreuse, amidst the memories of departed saints, was eminently favourable to a vivid imagination of their lives, as handed down by tradition, and this could hardly fail, in such seclusion from the outer world, to throw around them supernatural associations, in harmony with current beliefs at that period. The monk pacing up and down the enclosure gave freedom to his thoughts, without any attempt at deception, as well as any exercise of the critical faculty.

Numbers of miraculous cures are explicable on natural grounds ; and surprising accounts of power over animals receive illustration from the length to which, we know, the taming of wild and fierce creatures can be carried. Nor should the phenomena of " faith healing," which at present obtains so much attention,—whatever may be our opinion on the subject,—be left out of sight ; much less the efficacy of prayer, which is still happily exemplified in

the experiences of Christian life. Facts connected with believing endeavours after usefulness, and with the exercise of fervent intercession, as related in modern annals of religious enterprise, might easily be transformed into narratives like those of old legendary tradition. Yorkshire and Lancashire moors, and Cornish and Welsh mines, not to speak of other places, have tales of godly men and women furnishing metal out of which may be minted coin bearing a deep supernatural impress.

Moreover, a review of what is presented in the foregoing pages, must strike the reader as suggesting a contrast to the narratives of Holy Writ. Some legends touch those narratives, and overlap them; but the trivialities introduced make us feel the wide borderland between Apocryphal and genuine Gospels. As we descend the stream, departure from primitive teaching becomes more and more visible. Ante-Nicene and mediæval fables are infinitely removed from our Lord's "signs and wonders." The want of all spiritual dignity in the later case, as compared with the earlier, provokes impatience and contempt. Whilst Bible marvels are comparatively rare, those of the legendary order are of customary occurrence. A habit of expecting supernatural interpositions rendered people credulous to an inconceivable degree; and whereas the sacred writers relate what they witnessed, or knew from good authority, a gap of two,

or even of half-a-dozen centuries, frequently comes between the supposed occurrence and the relation of it in legendary accounts, without one atom of intermediate evidence.

Another and different class of comparisons I am constrained to notice. Church legends have a bright as well as a dark side.

First, think of Oriental mythologies. A philosophical method of studying the subject has brought out the better aspects of Hinduism; even resemblances to Christianity have been traced in some particulars; but it must never be forgotten that hideous imaginations are embodied in its best-known fables, and that immense is the contrast between them and the teaching of Divine revelation. Sacrifices of men and horses to the gods are sanctioned; the transmigration of souls through innumerable bodies is distinctly taught; caste is persistently upheld, and Sudras are crushed under the heels of Brahmans. The god Vishnu becomes a fish, a tortoise, a boar, and a dwarf. One god kills another; a god-boy lifts up a mountain on his finger, to shelter the objects of Indra's wrath, and Deities are propitiated by gratifying debased and loathsome inclinations.

Passing from Indian to Greek mythologies, we meet with unjust, quarrelsome, and licentious beings in the court of Olympus. Vice and crime run riot in stories of the father of gods and men, and of his

disreputable family. Love adventures of the husband are an unequalled scandal ; and the jealousies, scoldings, and spite of the wife do little more credit to the character of the fable. Mars is as sensual as his father. Mercury is a contemptible thief ; Neptune seeks to dethrone his brother, and is constantly quarrelling with the rest of his family. The effect of such fables must have been debasing. Poetry did not hide vices of the gods, and philosophy, in most cases, was insufficient to overcome the tendency of their examples.

If Greeks worshipped beauty, Scandinavians worshipped force ; and what appears specially interesting to us is, that Norse theology long survived that of Athens and Rome, and was believed by Danish seakings who invaded England a thousand years ago. The Edda told of frost and fire as winter gods, and of sunshine and fruitful seasons as summer ones ; and of a giant who nightly drove home his horses, and combed their manes, the horses being hail clouds and cold winds. Thor, the Thunderer, was vengeful, with lightning bolts in his fists ; but Balder, the White, was kind-hearted. These, with other like company, kept uproarious festivals in Valhalla, and drank wine out of skulls taken from their enemies.

It is true there were better things in classic fables. We read of Perseus who slew the Gorgon ; and of the Argonauts who went to Colchis for the golden

fleece; of Theseus, who tugged at a hard stone, and, rolling it over, found underneath the sword of bronze, and the sandals of gold; and of the Minotaur who slew the maidens, and of Theseus who slew the Minotaur, and then fell through pride, being afterwards chained to a rock, till released by Hercules. All these fables suggest lessons well unfolded by Charles Kingsley. Nor are the dreams of the North without instructive interest, especially that of the mysterious tree of life, which covers the wide world, and at the root of which sit the Divine fates spinning the threads of human destiny; but the contrast between pagan systems and our own blessed beliefs goes in degree far beyond any favourable comparisons which can be traced between them.

It is necessary to touch on these points in order that we may bring out the true relation of Church legends to heathen literature; and I may here add, respecting the legends reviewed, that follies on the part of hermits and monks are at times corrected by incidents of another order. Once a hermit said, "I am so surrounded with temptations that I must leave this place and go elsewhere." So he went out and fastened his sandals, when he saw the shadow of one who was doing the same thing. "Who are you?" asked the hermit. "I am self," answered the double; "where you go, I go too."

In reflecting upon the character of men and

women who have been passing before us, we must recollect that there are two leading classes of mental qualities, and also two leading developments of religious life. Scientific inquiry, independent exercise of judgment, bold originality, rejection of dogmas unsupported by evidence, and individuality of character in intellectual and ecclesiastical matters, such as are earnestly discussed in the present day,—these form qualities and developments of our own times; and certainly in these, men and women who appear in martyrologies and calendars of the Church were almost entirely deficient. To persons who are imbued exclusively with the nineteenth-century spirit “the saints” are objects of dislike, perhaps contempt. But there is another order of thought and principle,—that which consists in profound humility, in meek submission, in patient endurance, in the quiet contemplation of Divine truth, in self-control under irritating circumstances; and in self-renouncing obedience to the Divine Master, who is Supreme Moralist, for “all sorts and conditions of men,” laying down the grand laws for human beings in His Sermon on the Mount. Of these rather unpopular virtues, a good many saints of old, with all their imperfections, were examples worthy of being studied by ourselves, who live in an atmosphere more suited to the cultivation of another class of qualities. The blending of the

two, as far as possible, constitutes the ideal of perfect spiritual life.

In some of the legends told in these pages are shadowed forth the gracious attributes and saving work of the Healer, the Helper, the Guardian, the Patron, the Shepherd, and the Captain of souls. What was concentrated in our Lord was distributed, often in caricature, among those who were His sincere followers. The distribution served in some cases to divert attention from Himself, and to drop a veil over His Divine mediatorship; yet in canonizing saints, the Church canonized virtues unknown or disesteemed in the heathen world. The Gospel shot through mediæval and primitive times a ray such as genius never lent to the greatest of classical heroes. Monkish wonders may be as incredible as pagan metamorphoses, but what a different spirit they often breathe! They exhibit not the artifices and triumphs of lust, but the resistance and heroism of purity; not gods seeking to seduce mortals, but mortals humbly aspiring to be like God; not beings of a lofty sphere stooping down to the lowest depths of degradation, but men and women of lowly birth, by fervent charity and self-sacrifice, rising from obscurity to fame; while kings and queens, under the same inspiration, put by their crowns to toil and suffer for the poorest of mankind;—all these, side by side, are seen climbing up the paths of a mountain,

at the top of which stands the palace of Wisdom, Holiness, and Love. The milder virtues are glorified in legends I have given. Heroism is chiefly seen in suffering. The great end of life appears not in the attainment of wealth, or fame, or self-indulgence, not in being what people nowadays call comfortable and happy, but in denying themselves, and so following the great Self-sacrificer. The title of a Quaker book might be taken as the motto of many a legend, "No Cross, No Crown."

APPENDIX.

NOTE I.

LEGEND OF ST. SUNNEFA.

AS I have alluded to the Legend of St. Sunnefa, and as it is little known, I insert the following account of it, taken from the *Antiquary*, vol. v., p. 19. The original is printed in Langebek's "Scriptores verum Danicarum."

"In the days of Otho I. (A.D. 936-973), and of Haakon Jarl (A.D. 962-995), the then king of Ireland, dying, left, as heiress to his kingdom, a daughter, Sunnefa, a maiden beautiful and wise beyond her years. She had been brought up in the Christian faith, and herself lived, and encouraged her subjects to live, a Christian life. Her kingdom and her beauty attracted many—and those Pagan—sutors; she had, however, devoted herself to a life of chastity, and yielded neither to persuasion nor threats. One of her suitors making war upon her in order to obtain her kingdom and herself, she, finding no other hope, trusted herself to God, and with a number of followers—men, women, and children—embarked on board three ships, disdaining the use of oars, rudders, or other tackling, and committed herself and her followers to the God whom the wind and the sea obey. Thus they were borne, safe and sound, to that part of Norway known as Firdafylke, now Nordfjord and Söndfjord, and landed, some of them, on the island of Pim,—and of these we hear no more,—Sunnefa herself, with the remainder, on Selje, thirty or forty miles further north. There, on the western side of the island,

they found certain caves in the mountain side, in the which they lived for some time, serving Christ in abstinence, chastity, and poverty, and supporting life by fishing. These outside islands were in those early times uninhabited, but were used by the dwellers on the mainland as pasture for their kine. Some of these kine having been lost, their owners, believing them to have been stolen by Sunnefa's followers, desired Haakon Jarl, who then ruled Norway, to come with an armed force to destroy them. This wicked Jarl—the son of Sin, and a limb of the devil's body—landed on the island to slay the servants of God. But Sunnefa and her companions fled to their caves, and prayed to God that, whatsoever might be the manner of their death, their bodies might not fall into the hands of the heathens. Their prayer was heard, and a mass of stones, falling from the rocks above, closed the entrance of the caves, while the souls of the martyrs ascended to heaven. Their enemies, nowhere able to find them, returned to the mainland."

The legend further informs us that Olaf Tryggvesson, King of Norway, promoted the Christian faith amongst his subjects. Two men sailing to Thronhjem beheld on shore a pillar of light; it guided them to a spot where they found a human head, very fair in appearance, and sending forth delicious fragrance. They went to Olaf, who persuaded them to be Christians, and they told His Majesty what they had discovered. When he saw the head he pronounced it to be a saintly relic. They conducted him to the cave where it had been found, and there he met with "bones of a sweet smell," and at last the body of Sunnefa herself, fresh and uncorrupted as if only just dead. It was enshrined in the Cathedral of Bergen A.D. 1170.

This Olaf was no other than the St. Olave to whom so many churches in London are dedicated. During the Danish sway his memory seems to have been popular in this country.

NOTE II.

NARRATIVES FROM A MEDLÆVAL SERMON AND A
MODERN BIOGRAPHY.

“I WILL relate to you a circumstance, brethren, which I learned from a faithful report. There was a certain city of the Greeks in which Christians and Jews dwelt mingled with one another. Thence sprang familiarity and common dealings. The language of both was the same, while their religion differed. The children of the Jews were taught the learning of the Christians, and thus the sap of truth was by degrees distilled into the tender minds of the Jews, whence it came to pass that on the Holy Day of Easter, a Hebrew boy among his fellows and those of his own age approached to the altar and received the Holy Communion. When the rites of the sacred solemnity had been performed, the Hebrew boy returned home, and with childish simplicity disclosed to his mother that he had received a sacred portion from the Christian altar.

Then the mother, stirred with a woman’s fury, went to her husband, declared to him what had passed, and kindled in the father of the child madness and cruelty. Whereupon this most unnatural father heated a furnace, and threw his son into the midst of it, into the live coals and raging flames, and in his madness sealed up the mouth of the furnace with stones and cement.

The mother’s bowels of compassion were moved, and she yearned over her dying child ; she cried out in her rage, ran to the Christians, and disclosed that cruel and horrible tale to the ears of mourning friends. The Christians fly to the furnace, and more quickly than it takes to say it, break open the mouth thereof, and drag out the boy alive and safe whom they had supposed to have been burned within.

They wonder and rejoice and render due thanks to the Divine Presence. They ask the boy how he had escaped, and by whose protection he had overcome the flames of the furnace. To which he replied: 'The lady who sitteth above the altar of the Christians, and the little One whom she cherishes in her bosom, stood around me, and stretching forth their hands hedged my body round, and protected me from the flames and fiery coals, so that I felt no burning, but only the refreshment and comfort of a frame which could take no harm. By His fostering care, therefore, I escape unharmed from the furnace, whose most sacred body I received at the altar of the Christians.'

Forthwith there followed a most just vengeance on the heads of the Jews; and they who would not believe in the Incarnate Word were all alike burned in the aforesaid furnace. Behold, brethren, Christ everywhere protects His own fellow-soldiers, and suffers no one to perish whom He hath foreknown and predestinated to be a partaker of His heavenly kingdom. *He calls those whom He hath predestinated; He predestinates those whom He hath foreknown;* and in the foreknowledge of God no change or alteration can be made. Let us be born again unto our Saviour, who was (as on this day) born, *and, walking in newness of life, let us forget those things which are behind, and reach forth unto those which are before,* cleaving to Christ, abiding in Christ, enjoying Christ, who with the Father and the Holy Ghost liveth and reigneth, God for ever and ever. Amen."

The foregoing extract is taken from a sermon by Herbert de Losinga, Bishop of Norwich (A.D. 1050—1119), A.D. 1091—1119. See his "Life, Letters, and Sermons," published by Dean Goulburn and the Rev. H. Symonds, vol. ii., p. 31.

The editors remark that "the narrative in Daniel iii., of the three holy children preserved alive in Nebuchadnezzar's burning fiery furnace, struck the keynote of several legends." It is interesting and suggestive to read

in connection with the passage from Losinga's discourse the following anecdote in the life of the Rev. John W. Fletcher, vicar of Madeley:—

“One Sunday, when I had done reading prayers at Madeley, I went up into the pulpit intending to preach a sermon which I had prepared for that purpose; but my mind was so confused, that I could not recollect either my text or any part of my sermon. I was afraid I should be obliged to come down without saying anything. But, having recollected myself a little, I thought I would say something on the First Lesson, which was the third chapter of the Book of Daniel, containing the account of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego being cast into the fiery furnace. I found, in doing this, such extraordinary assistance from God, and such a peculiar enlargement of heart, that I supposed there must be some peculiar cause of it. I therefore desired, if any of the congregation found anything particular, they would acquaint me with it in the ensuing week. •

In consequence of this, the Wednesday after, a woman came and gave the following account:—

‘I have been for some time much concerned about my soul. I have attended the church at all opportunities, and have spent much time in private prayer. At this, my husband (who is a butcher) has been exceedingly enraged, and has threatened me severely as to what he would do to me if I did not leave off going to John Fletcher's church; yea, if I dared to go again to any religious meetings whatever. When I told him I could not in conscience refrain from going, at least, to the parish church, he became outrageous, and swore dreadfully, and said if I went again he would cut my throat as soon as I came back. This made me cry to God that He would support me; and though I did not feel any great degree of comfort, yet, having a sure confidence in God, I determined to do my duty and leave the event to Him. Last Sunday, after

many struggles with the devil and my own heart, I came downstairs ready for church. My husband said he should not cut my throat as he had intended, but he would heat the oven, and throw me into it the moment I came home. Notwithstanding this threat, which he enforced with many bitter oaths, I went to Church, praying all the way that God would strengthen me to suffer whatever might befall me. While you were speaking of the three children whom Nebuchadnezzar cast into the burning fiery furnace, I found all you said belonged to *me*. God applied every word to my heart; and when the sermon was ended, I thought if I had a thousand lives I could lay them all down for Him. I felt so filled with His love, that I hastened home, fully determined to give myself to whatsoever God pleased; nothing doubting that He either would take me to heaven, if He suffered me to be burnt to death, or that He would in some way deliver me as He did His three servants that trusted in Him. When I got to my own door I saw flames issuing from the oven, and I expected to be thrown into it immediately. I felt my heart rejoice, that if it were so, the will of the Lord would be done. I opened the door, and to my utter astonishment saw my husband upon his knees, praying for the forgiveness of his sins. He caught me in his arms, earnestly begged my pardon; and has continued diligently seeking God ever since.' "

This anecdote was published in a tract entitled "The Furious Butcher Humbled: a true and remarkable story, as related by the late Rev. Mr. Fletcher, Vicar of Madeley." It appears in two Lives of that eminently holy man—one written by the Rev. Joseph Benson, and the other recently, by the Rev. L. Tyerman, under the title of "Wesley's Designated Successor" (p. 93). Had such circumstances as Fletcher describes happened under the ministry of a mediæval saint, they would have been wrought into a legend of a supernatural character.

NOTE III.

TRANSFORMATION OF LEGENDS.

We have instances of this in the stories of Ursula and Sunnefa already pointed out, and in others referred to upon foregoing pages. A curious example of changes undergone by modern traditions occurs to me at the moment of completing the preparation of this volume.

It must be between sixty and seventy years ago that I read a narrative respecting the providence of God in the guidance and protection of His people. The substance of it was as follows :—

“At the close of the last century, two members of the Society of Friends were travelling on the borders of Scotland. Their names were James Dickenson and Jane Fearan, and they were at the time engaged in religious service. They came to an inn one night, and as there was no other accommodation in the neighbourhood, they were obliged to tarry there. An impression came over their minds that things were not right, and when a cold pie was placed on the table they suspected it was made of human flesh. They retired to an apartment by themselves, and saw through a chink in the boards somebody sharpening a large knife. They searched round the room to find a way of escape, and soon discovered a door which opened on a flight of stone steps, leading down to the highroad. They cautiously descended, and walked on some distance without their shoes, lest their footsteps should be heard. They reached a river, where there was a bridge, but James Dickenson felt it would not be safe to cross it, and that they must walk on some distance and then ford the stream. His companion, much surprised, nevertheless ‘followed his faith,’—such were the words employed,—and with his assistance she waded through the water. They sat down under a sandbank, till a fresh

conviction arose, that they ought to move still further on. They did so, and then they saw lights on the opposite bank, and heard a cry, 'Seek them, Keeper.' A dog was in pursuit, but had lost the scent on reaching the water's edge. After many vain attempts to urge forward the animal, the men who were with it gave up the pursuit. James Dickenson determined to go back to the house and recover the horses and baggage. Jane Fearon unwillingly complied, but to her great surprise found all things ready for them, and the horses saddled to carry them on their journey. Some time afterwards one of them was travelling the same road, and learned that the building had been razed to the ground, and its owner executed for murder." The story made such an impression that I never forgot it.

Just as I was about to send the last sheet to press I happened to open Roby's "Traditions of Lancashire," and there I read a chapter headed "George Fox." The author acknowledges that the tale he tells "has been attributed to other names and later dates," but he pushes it back to the seventeenth century, and makes the founder of Quakerism and a young man, named Seaton, companions in an adventure on the way from Kendal to Cartmel. They are benighted—a storm comes on—they cross a bridge and see a light in a public-house, when "a flesh pie" is set before them, but they are warned by an idiot boy not to touch it; he afterwards aids in their escape, after monitory dreams have disturbed the travellers. A great deal of conversation follows. They come to the bank of the river they had crossed before by the bridge, but George Fox resolves to go further along the bank, and then "he and his companion struggle hard with the full sweep of the torrent," and reach the other side by "little short of a miracle."

Then a dog is introduced in pursuit of them, and it loses scent as it reaches the river. After waiting for a while the Quaker resolves to return to the inn, where they

find a party of people to whom they tell their story—they search the place, find an abundance of plunder; and this is followed by the apprehension of the whole gang, and a provision made for the support of the idiot boy. This curious travesty serves to illustrate much that went on in the legend-making of old.

NOTE IV.

HERMITS OF THE DESERT.

I have abstained from giving at any length legends of such extraordinary ascetics, because it is impossible to do so without entering into revolting details which had better be left dead and buried in ancient authorities. Charles Kingsley, who has written a remarkable book on "The Hermits," is obliged now and then to say, "Here follows a story which need not be translated," "Here are words which it is unnecessary to quote," "More painful stories which had best be omitted." Yet in what the author relates, after these exclusions, is enough to produce in one's mind an instinctive recoil. When we think of the condition in which Simeon Stylites must have been, after living for thirty-seven years on the tops of successive pillars, the last of them being forty cubits high; when we read in Butler's "Lives" of the torment inflicted by "the saint" upon his own flesh, which he concealed until "it was discovered by the stench proceeding from the wound"; we feel that we are getting involved in subjects which had far better be put aside altogether. Lord Tennyson, in one of his poems, has to some extent painted a revolting picture of physical sufferings, self-inflicted by the strange recluse just mentioned; and he has, moreover, attempted to reveal thoughts of Simeon's hidden life, produced by "a struggle between self-abasement and self-conceit," as Kingsley calls it. The probability of the bard's conjecture

I shall not discuss. Nobody can justly suppose that Simeon was a hypocrite, and *designedly* pretended to what he was conscious he did not possess; but many, from what they know of human nature and its monstrous delusions, will charitably regard the extravagances of the hermit on his lofty pillar as the effect of pitiable mental disease.

“To keep under the body and bring it into subjection,” according to St. Paul’s ideal; to sympathise with him when he says, “Brethren, we are debtors not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die, but if ye through the spirit do mortify the deeds of the body ye shall live,”—all this is a Divine duty; and we must not be tempted to neglect its discharge by any ridicule cast upon the hermits and monks of old. But to turn mastery over the body into what amounts to its real murder; to kill the beautiful image of God stamped on our nature under the idea of mortifying lusts of the flesh, is to mistake the true end and the right means of spiritual ascendancy and self-government. To imagine that through the filthiness of the flesh we can cleanse ourselves from the filthiness of the spirit, is monstrously absurd. But it is unnecessary to pursue the subject, because even those who glorify saints of this order, treat them as exceptional beings, whom we are not to imitate, but only admire. Many a monk and nun of old, with all their mistaken asceticism, never violated the law of cleanliness, but wisely preserved that natural comeliness which is the gift of our heavenly Father.

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